

MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

July 2021

Following on from previous newsletters, a brief report on the discussions and decisions made by the Institute's Board of Directors for the period July 2020 to June 2021 is provided. The aim of the newsletters is to keep both staff and students aware of the Board's activities.

MIT's response to COVID-19

- In line with Government COVID-19 requirements, especially during lockdowns, the Board continued to meet remotely via Zoom videoconferencing. However, the Board was pleased to be able to meet recently in person at its May 2021 Board meeting.
- The Board continues to monitor and has endorsed MIT's updated COVID Safe Plans and the updated Business Continuity Plan COVID-19 Response Plan. It also monitors the transition to the hybrid/blended mode of study which includes some limited face to face classes.
- Throughout the year, the Board regularly expressed its appreciation of and congratulations to the MIT Executive Management and staff for their outstanding response to the crisis.

Approved Policies and Procedures

- Compliance Management Framework Policy and Procedure
- Sexual Assault and Sexual harassment Response Policy and Procedure
- Revised Academic and General Staff recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Revised Student Charter

MIT Strategic Plan 2018-2022

- The Board considered the 2020 Annual Report from the CEO at the November 2020 meeting and welcomed the significant achievements by MIT despite the impact of COVID-19 during 2020. More recently, at its May 2021 strategy session, the CEO presented an update on the current strategic plan in the light of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Annual Strategy Meeting

- At its May 2021 meeting, the Board held a special meeting devoted to the strategic direction of MIT. The Group General Manager, Executive Dean, Heads of School, and the Campus Directors also took part in the meeting.
- In addition to an update on the current strategic plan, the meeting addressed the broad topic of *MIT in the post-COVID 19 world*. Major topics included: **Student Learning**-*the type*

and style of learning preferred/demanded by students; A Competitive Edge-Characteristics of the most successful private colleges; and Market Drivers-Changes in market conditions affecting both international and domestic student recruitment. The major themes arising from the discussions encompassed:

- The need to focus on further understanding and reviewing approaches to improving the evaluation by students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, of their educational experience at MIT. These include, for specific disciplines and course levels, satisfaction with generic skills, student support and the quality of teaching.
- A focus on blended learning with the dual aim of combining the production of high-quality online learning materials as well as enhancing the on-campus learning experience.
- Building both capacity and the continued development of the skills of MIT's staff to drive student engagement and attainment including meeting the challenges of the previous two themes.
- Given the financial constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, strategic investment of funds in the key areas of the student learning experience, blended learning, and workforce skills to ensure that MIT not only remains competitive, but also enhances its competitive advantage.

Re-appointment of Directors

- The Board, sitting as the Nominations Committee, unanimously re-appointed the Chair, Emeritus Professor Wayne Robinson for a further 1-year term and re-appointed independent directors, Emeritus Professor David Battersby and Dr Patricia Stewart for further 2-year terms.

Academic Board and Board Standing Committee Appointments

- The Board approved and welcomed the following appointments to the Academic Board: Associate Professor Tony Jan as an academic staff representative (SITE, Sydney), Dr Rajan Kadel as an academic staff representative (SITE, Melbourne), Dr Gaythri Chethi as an academic staff representative (SOB, Sydney), re-appointment of Associate Professor Michael de Martinis as an academic staff representative (SOB, Melbourne) and re-appointment of Mr Warwick Spargo as Industry representative for the business disciplines.
- Appointment of student representatives to the Academic Board (Mrs Sania Singh and Mr Atish Apagee)
- Appointment of student representatives to the Student Experience Committee (Mr Jacob Keen, Ms Anuki Isara Fernando and Mr Kritika Sharma)

Senior Staff Appointments

- The Board welcomed the appointments of the new Executive Dean, Professor Michael Clements and the new Head of School (School of Business), Professor Stuart Orr. Shortly after their arrival at MIT, Professors. Clements and Orr attended the March meeting of the Board providing the Board with overviews of their experience and expertise and their short and medium-term plans and aspirations.
- The Board extended its gratitude and best wishes to the former Executive Dean, Professor ASM Sajeev, who retired at the end of 2020. Professor Sajeev was recognised by the Board as having made a remarkable contribution to MIT through his leadership and expertise.

Academic Integrity, Student Academic Outcomes and Review of Admissions Outcomes

- At its June 2021 meeting, the Board accepted the Annual Report on Academic Integrity for Trimesters 1, 2, and 3 in 2019 and 2020, and endorsed the recommendations from the Report.
- At the Board's November 2020 meeting, the Chair of the Academic Board provided the Board with a comprehensive analysis of student academic outcomes for the period 2015-2019. The Board accepted the report on student progression, attrition and completion and endorsed the recommendations contained in the report. The report on student academic outcomes is one of the most important reports coming to the Board and it was both pleasing and satisfying to observe that student performance trended upwards for each area for the period 2015-2019.
- The Board also received a report on admissions outcomes for the 2020 year from the Chair of the Academic Board with the broad conclusion drawn from the report being: that the admissions policies at MIT were delivering good outcomes pre-COVID and the few issues requiring attention had been addressed.

Board Self-evaluation of Performance 2020

- Each 12 months, the Board of Directors undertakes a self-assessment of its performance against its Terms of Reference. This covers several areas, including Strategic Direction; Risk Management and Compliance; Finance; Academic Governance; Corporate Governance; Board Committees and Processes; Stakeholder Communication.
- While the Board assessed that it had met its obligations under its Terms of Reference, it identified some areas for improvement. These included, placing more emphasis on monitoring of performance and compliance, longer-term strategies, improving its approach to risk management and compliance including academic risk and compliance. The Board approved an action plan to implement the improvements. The Board will conduct its next review in early 2022.

External Review of the Board

- The Board approved the terms of reference for the next external review of the performance of the Board and agreed in principle to carry out two external reviews between now and MIT's next application for reregistration in 2027.

Financials and FY2022 Budget

- The audited financial report for year ending 30 June 2020 was approved at the Board's September 2020 meeting.
- At its June 2021 meeting, the Board approved the FY2022 Budget noting the forecast financial impact of COVID-19 and the challenges with ongoing border closure. The Board was satisfied that MIT has strategies in place to mitigate such an impact, including successfully obtaining CSP funding approval to deliver several certificate courses for domestic students.

Risk and Risk Management

- The Board reviewed and approved changes to the Risk Register, Risk Management Plan and Detailed Risk Tables following regular reviews and recommendations from the Audit and Risk Management Committee.
- Accepted the Compliance Report from the Compliance Manager concerning compliance with the Threshold Standards, ESOS Act and National Code.

MIT Industry Advisory Committee

- Approved the establishment and terms of reference for the new Industry Advisory Committee. The primary function of this committee is to provide advice on industry trends in the fields of study relating to MIT's course offerings and industry training opportunities to assist MIT graduates prepare for careers in the workforce.

New Courses

- Endorsed the Academic Board's approval of the new Bachelor of Data Analytics degree for course accreditation.
- Noted the successful course accreditation for the new Master of Data Analytics and several CSP funded certificate courses in IT, Cyber Security and Networking.

Annual Review of the Performance of Agents

- The Board receives annually, a report on the performance of agents through the Managing Director. The 2020 report was accepted by the Board and the recommendations for action

contained therein were endorsed. The authors of the report were congratulated on the high quality and depth of the report.

Regulatory Updates

- Considered new and revised TEQSA guidance notes and publications during the year and sought feedback from relevant Board committees and the Academic Board.
- Considered and discussed the new Higher Education Provider Category Standards and in particular the requirements for status as a University College.

Professional Development for Directors

- At its June 2021 meeting, Directors addressed the topic of effective corporate governance using the latest TEQSA Guidance Note on Corporate Governance as a template. Directors assessed the performance of the MIT against the criteria contained in the guidance note.

The Board of Directors

Emeritus Professor Wayne Robinson (Chair)

Emeritus Professor David Battersby (Deputy Chair)

Dr Shesh Ghale (Chief Executive Officer)

Ms Jamuna Gurung (Owners' Representative)

Emeritus Professor Doug Grant (Chair of the Academic Board)

Mr James Joughin (Appointed member)

Dr Patricia Stewart (Appointed Member)

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