

## **Release of CHM Change Implementation Plan: Dean's message. May 12, 2021.**

Good afternoon colleagues. I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners of the land on which ANU is situated, I pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and I offer the same to the traditional owners of all other lands to which we connect today.

This afternoon, in this webinar, I want to give you a 'heads-up,' if you like, to the main contents of the CHM Change Implementation Plan which will be released later this afternoon. Today it's one-way communication by design – the raise hand, chat and Q&A functions of zoom are disabled. I will speak for about 20 minutes, and I will show 1 slide. I will not go into all the detail - far from it – there is lots in the pages of the document that you can read in your own time. But I want to orient you to what you are going to read.

I also acknowledge this has been a long process, and there is plenty of change fatigue, given 2020 was such a tough year for many reasons, the ANU Change Process started seven months ago, in October, and we were the last College to issue a change proposal on March 17<sup>th</sup>, after which, at our community's request, we extended the time for feedback by a week and a half, and then it took an extra week and a half longer than anticipated to review it all given we had such an overwhelming response.

We received 280 submissions, including 201 from current staff and students, and 79 from external parties, including local health services, other universities, national bodies, and from around the world. I've read every word of those submissions. We've met with student representatives, early career researchers, professional staff and senior academics, and listened to what each had to say. The College Executive Committee has then done everything possible to consider and address the feedback and, where appropriate, amend what was proposed.

It want you to know that I understand what a very challenging period this has been for everyone in our College, especially for but not only for directly-affected staff members, and how destabilising it has been at a busy time with research grant submissions, student classes, and other pressing demands. Yet many of you have contributed more than I could have hoped for through the feedback process. While there have been many criticisms of the process, a heavily prescribed one under the Enterprise Agreement, the process has worked as it should, and it's hard to imagine designing a better way to get input from all the corners of our College. The amount, thoughtfulness and overall value of the feedback reflects a deep commitment to the university and deep understanding of its intricate workings. The Plan is very much improved as a result. And I thank you for this.

Right up front I also thank your College Executive Committee – Anna Cowan, Graham Mann, Lyndall Strazdins, Iain Walker, Zsuzsoka Kecskes, Chris Nolan, Donelle Claudianos and Erica Kneipp - who have worked tirelessly for many months now to bring forward what we now believe to be the best plan possible for the future. The team was presented with an almost impossible situation, weighed up some pretty awful options, and worked through preparing a proposal, then the feedback, and then improving the plan, revising the proposal and thinking through what it would take to implement it. Each has done his or her best to represent the interests and needs of our students, academic and professional staff, and important external stakeholders, and at the same time to work collaboratively with other members of the Executive to reach a co-designed outcome that we believe is best for everyone, and ultimately for our national university.

Before we go to the key changes, I want to just remind us why we are here in the first place.

We knew, before the pandemic, that staying the same was not an option. The College Strategic Plan, which you know as TRANSFORM, was initiated by the University in 2019 because it recognised the ways of working that had sustained us for almost 75 years, and underpinned substantial success mind you, just weren't enough to survive, let alone flourish, in a very different research and education landscape, where we are simply being outperformed and outpaced in many areas of health and medical research by much larger and nimbler competitors. We need to preserve what is important and adapt appropriately to ensure we can continue to be excellent and serve the nation. Many of you have seen the TRANSFORM strategy, and it's available on the College website.

Furthermore we all are realising that the world will not be the same after the pandemic, and we most definitely couldn't stay the same. The University is about a 1.2 billion-dollar business, of which CHM comprises about 10%. The University started 2020 in a strong cash position, but by the end of 2020 it posted a \$162m loss, and the forecast for 2021 is of \$100m plus further deficit. You would have seen no further support for universities in last night's federal budget, and yet the borders will almost certainly remain closed, and international students shut out, for another year at least. Our University, unlike some others, has chosen to take the steps necessary to deal with this scenario, hopefully all in one go, through first emergency control of expenditure last year, and then the ANU Recovery Plan which required reduction of 467 jobs across the university, which is about 10% of the total workforce.

Our College's operating budget has been reduced by about almost \$12million, which is 20% of what we expected at the start of 2020, and by about \$6million, or 10% of what we actually spent in 2020, four-fifths of which goes on salaries. There is no escaping the fact we had to get smaller, even after confirming approximately 30 voluntary staff separations in 2020.

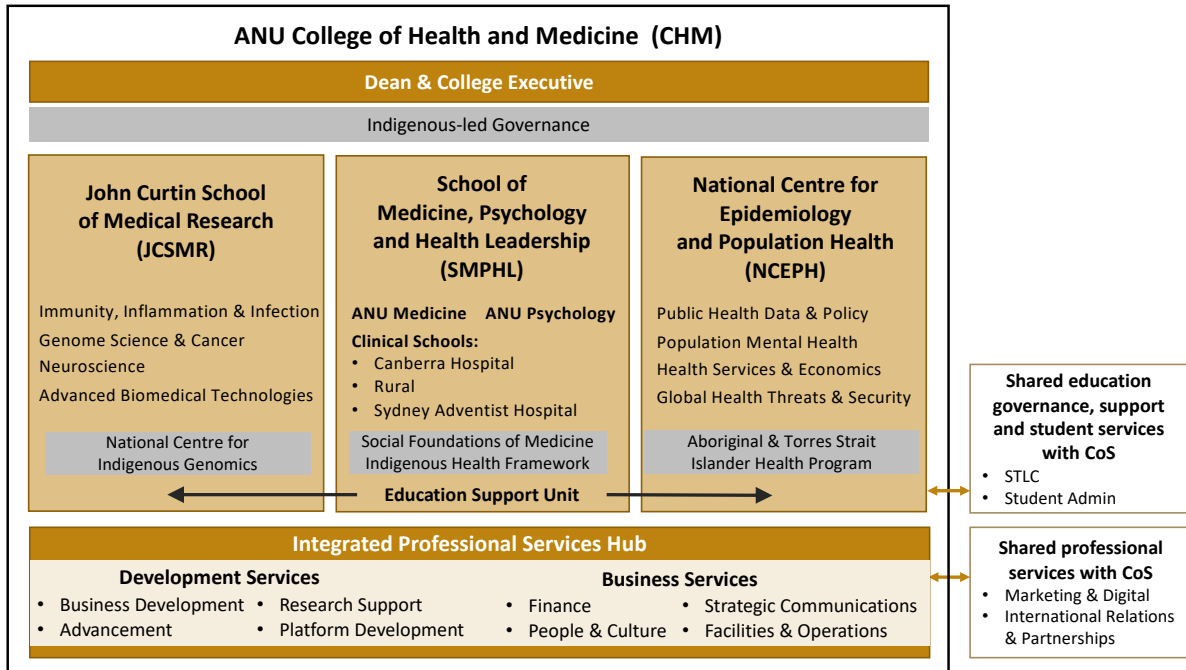
So up front we considered two seemingly bad options to meet the financial imperative: (i) closure of a current School (eg RSP, ANUMS, or RSPH) and discontinuing all relevant teaching and research; and (ii) apportioning a 15 per cent budget reduction equally across all four Schools. Both just seemed terminal to what we hoped for and were aspiring to achieve.

Instead the College Executive agreed on four approaches to change that were fitting with our strategic priorities, and could either reduce costs or generate additional revenue in the short to medium term:

1. Consolidation of entities and support structures to promote disciplinary and interdisciplinary capabilities, improve efficiency and enhance quality;
2. Creating a future-facing education powerhouse able to expand into new distinctive offerings;
3. Enhancing our capabilities to deliver on our national and local responsibilities; and
4. Focus on areas of research strength with competitive advantage and ensuring pipelines supporting discovery and translation.

Our Plan is organised around these four approaches, and in the Implementation Plan you can read how the original proposal fits in, a detailed summary of the feedback, and how we've responded.

What I want to do now, though, is show you one slide of the revised structure for our College that we plan to implement, and step you through it.



The name of the College will stay the College of Health and Medicine.

The College has three schools, not four as currently, nor two as was proposed. Each school will have academic staff who contribute to teaching and research – there won't be research only or teaching only schools.

If I can start in the middle, a new School of Medicine, Psychology and Health Leadership will be formed by bringing together the ANU Medical School and the Research School of Psychology. It is not one inferior to the other, it is a truly shared entity, and will be the home of clinical medicine, psychological sciences, health social sciences, for example. The school will be based strongly in the university, accessing all that the university offers, and new Clinical Schools will be created that are based with our health service partners – Canberra Hospital (with Calvary), and Sydney Adventist Hospital for the time-being, to add to the existing Rural Clinical School. This structure – a medical school with clinical schools – will be very familiar to most of you and is a very effective way for the university and health services to engage and partner while pursuing their core missions. Furthermore this school will host the postgraduate and professional education support capabilities for the entire College – in

a new Education Support Unit, which is similar in concept to the previously proposed Centre for Health Education and Leadership (CHEL), but which sits properly within a school.

To the left is the John Curtin School of Medical Research, which will also be more focused in the research fields that core funds support. Building on all the planning work done previously, and opportunities that have been recognised, divisions (which are different to 'departments' in design in that they will hopefully enable cross-discipline engagement) will exist in Immunity, Inflammation & Infection, Genome Science & Cancer, Neuroscience, and new aggregation of academic expertise in Advanced Biomedical Technologies.

Yes it is correct that neuroscience is there, despite the proposal to discontinue funding of core continuing positions. This is a significant change we have made on the basis of your views and those from the external community that feedback. Instead of stopping altogether, or staying the same, the Vice-Chancellor and the SMG have agreed for us to continue the circuit and cellular neuroscience and the education programs, and embark on a University-wide strategic planning process to see how we can strengthen it in line with what we know is needed to flourish in the future – connection of the deep cellular and circuit neuroscience expertise to adjacent compatible areas such as cognitive and behavioural neuroscience, computational neuroscience, brain-machine interfaces and other scientific areas, and to human studies, clinician scientists and commercial partners to access translational research support. This strategic review will begin shortly, and will be chaired by Distinguished Vice-Chancellor's Fellow, Professor Sir Ed Byrne, an eminent neuroscientist and university leader.

To the right is a school named the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health. You will recall we proposed a merger of population health and psychology – based on feedback this will not

go ahead. However there was a lot of support for elevating back to prominence the profile of NCEPH, which has always had excellent brand recognition and been known for its impactful work. A common comment was, that if ever there was a time for a National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health to have major impact for the nation, it was now. The plan is to have the elements of RSPH be incorporated in the new NCEPH in a way that enhances its capacity – in a process that preserves what’s been great about NCEPH since 1988 and the other entities since their inception, but works in a new and even more powerful way, with purposeful ‘engines’ to support engagement and impact with Government and the community, and national leadership in health data sciences in particular. I know that work is already well underway.

At the foot is another significant initiative – consolidation of professional support structures into an integrated services hub with two broad divisions – development services that will oversee the mostly strategic and revenue generating functions, and the business services that oversee mostly the core operations of the college (obviously these are overly simplified generalisations, but you get what I mean). The goal here is to provide everyone with better service, not just save money. We will monitor it, and make sure that it happens.

I’ve kept this very high-level – there is lots of detail in the Implementation Plan. There are also still many things to work out. However I am quite sure that together we have achieved our major goal at this time – meeting the financial imperative, and at the same time shaping a future-focused College and laying the foundations for transformation and success.

Of course not everyone will like every aspect of this plan, and I expect some people will disagree with it. And of course there are still members of our community who are losing their jobs through it, colleagues who have worked just as hard and given just as much to

the university as anyone else. That is a tragic consequence of the challenges we face.

I suggest that, because of this disruption, pain and suffering, and even though it's far too much of a cliché, it really is important that we don't waste this crisis. As we all know, ANU was founded to help nation-building after the last global crisis, World War II, and we'll undoubtedly be doing it again after COVID.

To finish, I want to reflect on how other great universities have responded in global crises - as Peter Tufano, Dean of the Saïd Business School at Oxford did recently, drawing parallels between our predicament now and five great American business schools in World War II: Wharton, Haas, Tuck, Chicago, and Harvard. After decades of stability, they were directly impacted by the war, and the environment in which they operated was redefined, much as we all are facing today. All of these schools shrank in size as students and faculty were drafted, most tried to maintain their existing activities and make some innovations, and some pushed on with long-term institutional change. However one school – Harvard Business School - chose a different path, shutting all peacetime programs as it fully committed not only to helping win a global war but, just as importantly, to forging a lasting peace—the long-term economic prosperity that followed the war. After the war HBS didn't go back to pre-war programs, instead it remained focused on the future and has, in many ways defined it as the pre-eminent business school.

I use this example because Tufano offered five learnings that are very relevant to our situation at ANU right now:

First, it is normal to resist a crisis, but ultimately we have to fully embrace it if we want to use it to drive change.



Second, being clear about our pre-pandemic sense of mission and purpose is good, but we need to be flexible enough to adjust it as times change.

Third, we obviously have to innovate – but not just look at *how* we do things, such as putting classes online, for example, but asking also *what* we should teach, and *who* we should teach.

Fourth, we have to accept that these times call for different approaches to leadership and decision-making than the long and drawn-out democratic processes that academics are used to.

And finally, because change in academia can be tortuously slow and painful, especially at successful universities with long traditions like ANU, the pandemic provides an opportunity to sharpen and redefine purpose and, if it's authentic, it can trump history and tradition and open up the possibilities for substantial change, like it did at HBS.

As a College we have done the work to define our purpose and have it approved by ANU Council in February: “improving lives in Australia and the world, by pushing the frontiers of knowledge, preparing leaders who make a difference, strengthening and reforming health systems, and supporting communities to flourish.”

Now is our time to shine, and the implementation plan is a significant step towards doing so.

I look forward to hearing what you think, and working together to ensure ANU remains one of the world's great universities through all of this. I wish you a good afternoon.