



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

ARC

31 July 2025

Professor Sakkie Pretorius
Deputy Vice Chancellor – Research
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

By email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Professor Pretorius

**Notice Requiring the Provision of a Report and Information – Macquarie University
Grant FT220100427**

I refer to:

- the ARC's Notice of Suspension issued to Macquarie University on 12 February 2025 (**Suspension Notice**);
- your letter to me of 8 May 2025;
- [REDACTED] and
- [REDACTED] attached report from the Expenditure Review (**Review**).

Expenditure Review

Thank you [REDACTED] for providing the Review. I acknowledge:

- that the Review identified 19 transactions with a cumulative value of \$8,598.76 that may not align with the Grant Guidelines, Grant Agreement and/or Macquarie University's applicable policies (**Anomalies**); and
- the advice in your letter that Macquarie University will consider the Anomalies as part of the preliminary assessment of research integrity matters that is currently underway.

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I anticipate that the ARC will have questions and seek information in relation to the Anomalies. For this, the ARC will be in touch in due course.

I also note that the Review report states that ‘Macquarie University has informed [EY] that [Macquarie University] will refund the \$8,598.76 of funding [connected to the Anomalies] to the ARC’. Can you please confirm if this is in fact Macquarie University’s intention. If so, the ARC will make arrangements to facilitate the repayment.

Integrity Matters

I acknowledge that the preliminary assessment of research integrity matters being conducted by Macquarie University continues, and awaits input from an independent adviser. I also acknowledge the commitment [REDACTED] to provide me with a copy of the outcome of the preliminary assessment within two weeks after it is made, consistent with my request [REDACTED]

Compliance with the Suspension Notice

In your letter of 8 May 2025, you state that Macquarie University is treating the matters specified in Items A, B and C of the Suspension Notice as a complaint under Macquarie University’s research integrity procedures.

The ARC does not, at this time, object to Macquarie University employing its research integrity processes and procedures to comply with those parts of the Suspension Notice that require investigation or assessment by Macquarie University, to the extent that the application of such processes and procedures is consistent with the Suspension Notice and the Grant Agreement.

However, multiple parts of Items C and D do not, themselves, require Macquarie University to conduct an investigation or assessment, or constitute an allegation by the ARC as to the existence of a research integrity issue. Rather, they require Macquarie University to provide information and materials to the ARC concerning the administrative systems and processes maintained by Macquarie University, as part of Macquarie University’s compliance with the Grant Agreement. At the date of the Suspension Notice, and since, the information and materials sought by these Items should have been known or accessible to Macquarie University. To-date, Macquarie University has not fulfilled these requirements of either of Items C or D of the Suspension Notice.

In this light, the ARC requires that Macquarie University comply with the following parts of the Suspension Notice by **5 pm on 15 August 2025**:

- Item C.1 — Advise what conflicts of interest Dr Abdel-Fattah has declared in relation to the Grant, and when she last made a conflict of interest declaration.
- Item C.2 — Advise and provide evidence regarding the steps Macquarie University has implemented to manage any conflicts of interest that Dr Abdel-Fattah disclosed (and how it continues to implement those strategies).
- Item C.3 — Advise and provide evidence regarding the steps Macquarie University is taking to consider and manage risks associated with conflicts of interest for Dr Abdel-Fattah independently of any declarations that she may or may not make.
- Item C.5 — Confirm, and provide evidence of, the bases on which Macquarie University concludes that Dr Abdel-Fattah attended the protest in a personal capacity.

This might include, for example, written communications between Dr Abdel-Fattah and Macquarie University before the protest activity occurred on 26 April 2024, in which Dr Abdel-Fattah advised that she would attend the protest in a personal capacity.

- In respect of Item C.5, I note that on 2 December 2024, you advised the ARC by email that Dr Abdel-Fattah attended the protest ‘in a private capacity’ and that this ‘activity was not part of, or in any way linked, to the research project funded by the ARC nor included in any ethics application submitted to Macquarie University’s Human Research Ethics Committee’.

The ARC trusts that such representations would not be made without Macquarie University having appropriate bases to support them. Item C.5 requires confirmation of, and evidence supporting, these bases.

- I note that Item C.6 operated as an alternate to Item C.5, providing that if Macquarie University now held doubts as to whether Dr Abdel-Fattah did in fact attend the protest in a personal capacity, to conduct an investigation into this and provide the ARC with a copy of the report detailing the investigation.

If Macquarie University now holds such doubts, and is conducting an investigation as part of its research integrity processes, please confirm this.

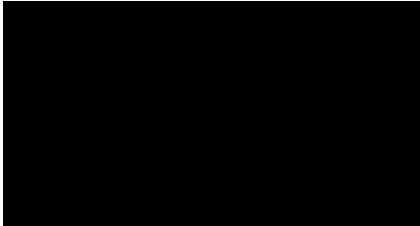
- Item C.7 — Provide copies of all documentation setting out the principles and management strategies previously applied, and currently being applied, by Macquarie University in respect of:
 - a. Dr Abdel-Fattah’s attendance at protests, events of a political nature, and other events that might present perception or reputational risks, in connection with the Activity; and
 - b. balancing and managing interactions between the Activity and Dr Abdel-Fattah’s private interests.
- Item D.1 — Provide copies of documentation setting out all variations or other changes to the Grant or the Activity (including the Activity’s ethics plan(s)) that were not reported, or have otherwise not been previously provided, to the ARC (either because the variation was not considered significant enough to require notification under the Grant Agreement, or otherwise).
- Item D.2 — Provide an explanation of the process that was followed to implement the variations in relation to which documentation is provided under Item D.1.
- Item D.3 — Provide a copy of the risk management plan for the Activity (including all variations, updates, and additional plans to manage risk, throughout the duration of the Grant).
- Item D.4 — Provide a copy of the ethics plan for the Activity (including all variations, updates, and additional plans relating to ethics management, throughout the duration of the Grant).
- Item D.5 — Provide a copy of all ethics approvals and clearances for the Activity (including all variations, updates and additional approvals or clearances, throughout the duration of the Grant).

- Item D.6 — Provide a copy of the data management plan for the Activity (including all variations, updates, and additional plans relating to data management, throughout the duration of the Grant).

For clarity, this letter is a notice from the ARC under the Grant Agreement, and the ARC requires the provision of the information and materials described above pursuant to clauses 16.3, 16.4 and 20.2 of the Grant Agreement.

The ARC reserves all of its rights in respect of this matter.

Yours sincerely,



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Chief Executive Officer

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