



28 November 2025

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

By email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Professor Pretorius

Re: Macquarie University Grant FT220100427

I refer to:

- the ARC's Notice of Suspension issued to Macquarie University on 12 February 2025 (**Suspension Notice**);
- the July 2025 Ernst & Young Expenditure Review Final Report (**EY Report**)
- Preliminary Assessment Report RI2504 dated 16 September 2025 (**PAR**); and
- my email to you dated 21 October 2025.

Research Integrity Review Committee

In my email to you dated 21 October 2025, I advised that due to the complexity of the matters covered in the PAR, the ARC referred this matter to its Research Integrity Review Committee (**RIRC**) for review in accordance with the ARC's Research Integrity Policy.

The RIRC has completed its review. Relevantly, it has found that with respect to research integrity matters, the process documented through the PAR was thorough and addressed all research integrity concerns.

However, the RIRC recommended that the ARC request confirmation of the outcome of the review to be undertaken by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee (**Ethics Committee**), to determine whether the 'Jars Workshop' was covered under the current ethics approval for Grant FT220100427 (**Grant**). This is based on Recommendation 4 in the PAR at p 97.

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Consistent with the RIRC's recommendation, and pursuant to clauses 16.3(b) and 20.2 of the Grant Agreement, I ask that Macquarie University provide this confirmation by email to ResearchIntegrity@arc.gov.au within 7 days of the review being completed.

Expenditure Recommendations

The EY Report identified discrepancies with 112 transactions which it divided into:

- Expenditure not aligned to ARC Grant Guidelines (19 transactions totalling \$3,262.80)
- Transactions not aligned with Macquarie's travel and expense policies (93 transactions totalling \$5,335.95).

On page 67 of the PAR, at *Evaluation of 5.5 Expenditure and Accountability*, R1 states there were 6 items totaling \$368.30 that require corrective action. This amount of \$368.30 needs to be refunded / removed from the Grant expenditure as it does not comply with the Grant Agreement.

At part 3.2 on page 10 in relation to the 93 transactions, EY said that "...*Management should investigate these transactions further.*" However, subsequent correspondence and the PAR only refer to the 19 transactions totalling \$3,262.80.

Please provide the outcomes of Macquarie University's investigation of the 93 travel-related discrepancies recommended by EY, and whether it intends to repay the affected \$5,335.95 to the ARC.

R2 (also on page 67) refers to guidance about incidental costs associated with travel. The ARC requests that Macquarie University provides the ARC confirmation once guidance about incidental costs associated with travel has been updated as per R2.

Further PAR Recommendations

The PAR contains recommendations that Dr Abdel-Fattah:

- complete a new risk assessment and management plan to identify and mitigate potential risks:
 - using the Macquarie University ARC Risk Management Plan Template; and
 - including a strategy to manage 'Reputation, delays and grievances: Any potential for adverse publicity for the project' (Recommendation 2, p 96);
- update her data management plan (including on the basis that her participation activities for the purposes of the Grant (via autoethnography) constitutes research involving humans, and records created of such would be considered research data,

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such that it should be reflected in the data management plan) (Recommendation 3, p 97);

- if applicable (based on the determination made by the Chair of the Ethics Committee pursuant to Recommendation 4), submit an ethics amendment to the Ethics Committee to provide further details about activities involving participants proposed to be undertaken for research in association with the Grant (Recommendation 5, p 97);
- consider and document whether the APAN Report constitutes or presents research, and if so, clarify the ethics governance (if any) in place for that research (Recommendation 6, p 98);
- consider and document further details about the distinction between personal experiences which may later be reflected upon versus formal data creation about personal experiences for research purposes (Recommendation 7, p 98); and
- submit an ethics amendment to the Ethics Committee, providing details about the aspects of her project involving autoethnography and her approach to the management of associated ethics issues (if any) (Recommendation 7, p 98).

Next steps

I request that Macquarie University provide by 5 December 2025, in respect of each Recommendation referred to above, either:

- confirmation that the Recommendation has been complied with and fulfilled; or
- if the Recommendation has not been complied with and fulfilled, an undertaking that the Recommendation will be complied with and fulfilled by 1 February 2026.

Please also confirm that funds on all other ARC grants to Macquarie University are being managed in accordance with the requirements of the grant agreements.

Future of the Grant

Upon receiving the confirmations or undertakings (as applicable) requested above, the ARC will make a determination on whether to issue a further written notice to Macquarie University allowing activities associated with the Grant to recommence in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

Yours sincerely



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Chief Executive Officer

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