



Outcomes from Macquarie University Council meeting 11 December 2025

The Macquarie University Council met on 11 December 2025 in the Council Room at the Wallumattagal Campus and addressed matters in accordance with its governance responsibilities and the [annual agenda plan](#).

2026 BUDGET

At its December meeting, the Council approved the 2026 Budget and Capital Management Plan, following detailed review and endorsement by the Finance and Facilities Committee. The Vice-President, Finance and Resources, presented the 2026 budget and 2027–2030 projections, outlining key assumptions on operating cash flow, capital expenditure, and net debt ratios. Internal financial ratios are expected to remain above threshold limits, consistent with an ‘AA’ credit rating.

2026 is positioned as a transition year, with the regulatory framework relatively clear. From 2027 onwards, the University’s position will depend on negotiations with the new Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC). Council discussed current political and regulatory challenges and their impact on long-term forecasting.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Expert Council of University Governance (ECUG) Principles and Action Plan

Council discussed the assessment of the University’s governance arrangements against the eight ECUG Principles and approved the proposed Action Plan, which sets out initiatives to address identified gaps. The University is well-positioned to meet the requirements of the principles; however, further work is required to strengthen transparency measures, remuneration disclosures, and the communication of Council decisions.

Self-Review of Council - Survey Results

In 2025, Council undertook an internal review of its performance through an anonymous Qualtrics survey of Council members. The results, reviewed at the December meeting, indicated improvement compared to the previous internal survey conducted in 2021. The highest-rated response was: “Overall, this is a harmonious Council,”—a particularly positive outcome given recent public commentary noting that not all Councils share this characteristic.

Key areas for further enhancement include improving transparency, strengthening engagement with the University community, and enhancing communication from Council. These focus areas will be addressed as part of the ECUG Action Plan.

Additionally, the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor are meeting individually with Council members in December and February to gather further feedback on Council’s performance.

STRATEGY

Vice-Chancellor's Strategy and Enterprise Performance Report:

Council reviewed the Vice-Chancellor's Strategy and Enterprise Performance Report, which outlined the University's progress against the Operating Plan, highlighted emerging issues, and provided updates on key developments across all areas. Notably, the recent grant tender and funding successes delivered outstanding results, marking a record level of research funding for Macquarie.

Indigenous Strategy 2026 – 2030

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) provided a summary presentation to the Council on the new Indigenous Strategy 2026 – 2030, outlining the five priority areas. He provided an update on milestones achieved in 2025, including student success and performance metrics and the broad community engagement and consultation conducted throughout 2025.

REPORTS

Report from Chair of Academic Senate

Established under the *Macquarie University Act 1989*, the Academic Senate oversees the quality of teaching, learning, research, and research training. The Council receives a report from the Senate at each meeting by the Chair of the Academic Senate, who is an ex officio member of Council. At its 25 November 2025 meeting, the Senate:

- Recommended one nomination for Emerita/Emeritus Professor (which was subsequently approved by Council).
- Approved amendments to several policies, including the Appeals Policy and Admission Policy (Schedule 1: English Language Admission Requirements).
- Endorsed curriculum changes, including the discontinuation of several courses with “teach-out plans” to support current students.
- Discussed the EUG Final Report on University Governance, noting its emphasis on Academic Governance.
- Considered the annual report on Research Integrity.

The Chancellor encouraged members to attend a Senate meeting in 2026.

Report from the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting (ARC)

The Chair of ARC presented a report to Council on the activities of the ARC meeting held on 20 November 2025. Key items discussed at the meeting included a continued focus on implementing the recommendations of the external audit into Cyber Security arrangements, the commencement of the new Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) and a review of a draft Cyber Roadmap. The Committee also received an update from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) on foreign arrangements, including consideration of risks associated with the partnership with Nanjing Normal University.

Report from the Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting (FFC)

Council received a report from the Finance and Facilities Committee (FFC) meeting held on 25 November 2025. The Chair highlighted key items, including:

- Endorsement of the 2026 Annual Budget and Capital Management Plan
- Updates on major projects, including the RNA facility and the Central Animal Facility
- Progress on Digital Transformation initiatives, notably Student 360 Phase 2, which is now entering the build phase.

Council was also advised that, under its Delegation of Authority, the FFC approved:

- A market engagement process for the University's cleaning services
- An early-stage investment fund to support the realisation of economic, social and environmental impact from university research and education activities
- An agreement for the provision of radiation oncology services at Macquarie University Hospital.

Report on Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (Including annual Update on Gender Equity)

Council received a presentation from the Chief People Officer on Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging activities and reporting in 2025. Council discussed and noted actions being undertaken to support improvements in Gender Equity within the University.

POLICIES

Council considered and endorsed the **Whole-of-Organisation Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Plan**, which was submitted as part of the University's compliance with the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence. Council commended the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Students and their teams for their significant efforts in finalising the document under challenging circumstances.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

On the recommendation of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee (NRC), Council approved the appointment of **Professor Emerita Mary Chiarella AM** as an Externally Appointed Member on Council for a four-year term, commencing 1 January 2026. Professor Emerita Chiarella is an internationally renowned nurse leader with a distinguished career in nursing services and served as the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, NSW Health in 2003/2004.

Council formally also expressed its appreciation to **Professor Catherine Dean** and **Associate Professor Nikola Balnave** for their valuable service as Elected Academic Staff members, with their terms concluding on 31 December 2025. They noted that the newly elected academic staff members - **Professor Michelle Arrow** (School of Humanities) and **Associate Professor Nicole Matthews** (School of Communication, Society and Culture) commence their two-year terms on 1 January 2026.

Disclaimer: This report provides an overview for the University community of the Council's decisions and actions at the relevant meeting. It is not intended to cover every decision made at the meeting or the full details of decisions and discussions. Inquiries and requests for further information can be directed to the University Council Secretary at councilsecretary@mq.edu.au.