MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL REPORT OF OUTCOMES - MEETING 22 October 2026

Statement of the University's Public Purpose

Macquarie University is established in the public interest by the Macquarie University Act 1989. The object of the University is the promotion, within the limits of the University's resources, of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence.

Statement of the Council's Role

As stipulated under part 4 of the Act, the Council acts for and on behalf of the University in exercising the University's functions. It has responsibility for the control and management of the University's affairs and may act in any matter relating to the University in the manner it considers best suited to promoting the University's objects and interests.

Place, Date and Background to the Meeting

The Macquarie University Council met on 22 October 2026 in the Council Room at the Wallumattagal Campus and addressed matters in accordance with its governance responsibilities and the annual agenda plan.

The meeting was attended by Ms Lynelle Briggs AO as part of the Council-initiated Review of Council's Performance.

Strategic Focus

Research Strategy

Council received an update on implementation of the University's Research Strategy and progress against its 2035 Research Targets and Future-Shaping Research Priorities. Discussion included research performance and international research opportunities. Council also discussed progress on the University's bio-innovation initiative, in particular the initiatives across all four faculties and how these strengthen the links between the University's enterprises and academic activities.

The opportunities and challenges related to potential investments in Horizon Europe were also discussed.

Faculty of Science and Engineering Focused Report

Council also received a report on the Faculty of Science and Engineering, including the launch of the Faculty's 2026-2030 strategic plan, progress on research performance, improved student outcomes and retention, including the role played in these by the opening of the new Engineering Innovation Building.

Council welcomed the University's achievement of ten years of annual growth in research funding.

The Faculty's approach to international partnerships and managing foreign interference compliance risks were also discussed.

Workforce Strategy and University Culture

Council received the initial results of the University's organisational culture assessment, and discussed the credibility given to the results by the strong response rate to the survey and potential initiatives aimed at moving our existing culture closer to the University's ideal culture over time.

It was regarded as important to have undertaken the survey after a period of significant organisational change, with the results providing a baseline to identify key areas requiring action and a metric against which to assess the success of forthcoming initiatives.

Vice-Chancellor's Strategy and Enterprise Performance Report (VCSEPR)

The VCSEPR is a standing item at each meeting. The report provided Council members with an update on the finalisation of the Student Load agreements with the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) and the first report from the National Student Ombudsman. As part of this report, Council considered the University's annual Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) results and discussed factors contributing to recent declines in performance. Council agreed that targeted strategies are required to address identified areas of concern and improve student outcomes. Council also emphasised the importance of the forthcoming student experience survey to developing effective responses.

Keys Matters

Racism and Inclusion

Council approved the Council Commitment on All Racism and noted the University's broader policy framework for addressing racism, discrimination, bullying and other unacceptable behaviours.

TEQSA requires all universities to have a policy on racism, including definitions of antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in place by 1 January 2027.

Noting the views expressed by stakeholders during the consultation process, and during the discussions at Academic Senate, Council emphasised the importance of ongoing review, monitoring and clear communication with the University community regarding the rationale for decisions and the broad outlines of feedback received during consultation.

Council also noted that the policy would likely evolve over time in light of the experience at Macquarie and other Australian universities, and that this necessitated regular review of the framework and the close monitoring of the impact and operation of both the Commitment and the policy

Financial Sustainability and Infrastructure

Council received updates from the Finance and Facilities Committee, including matters relating to the University's long-term financial position and debt funding strategy.

New Student-Led Organisation (SLO)

After extensive analysis and consultation across the sector evaluating potential operating models, Council also approved the establishment of a new Student-Led Organisation (SLO). The SLO will commence in 2027, which will also constitute the final year of the Government-approved transition program. The new SLO will support student representation and engagement and form a key component of the University's transition to an independent, student-led, governance model from 1/1/2028.

Elections for Board members of the SLO will occur shortly.
Council also discussed the need for the University to provide appropriate support, including governance training, for Directors of the SLO.

Student Accommodation

After a walk-through of the site, Council reviewed plans for a proposed student accommodation development and expressed support for the proposed site and design. No final decision to proceed is required at this stage and Council expressed support for moving to the next stage of the development approval process.

Governing Body Matters and Performance

Council Performance

Council welcomed Ms Lynelle Briggs AO, who is conducting an external review of Council's performance. Members were briefed on the review methodology and expected reporting timeframes.

Council anticipates receiving Ms Briggs' report in early 2027, at which time it will develop its response and share the key elements of both with the University community.

Council Membership and Succession Planning

Council received updates on succession planning activities and the recruitment process for future Council appointments, including the use of an independent search firm to assist the Nominations and Remuneration Committee in identifying a broad pool of potential candidates who satisfied the requirements of the Council's skills matrix.

Recent Parliamentary Inquiry Findings

Council considered sector governance developments, including the University's response to recent parliamentary inquiry findings.

Other Matters

- approved amendments to the Professor Emerita/Emeritus framework and approved two Emerita appointments;
- approved a posthumous award of the Juris Doctor degree;
- approved the voluntary deregistration of Macquarie University Clinical Associates Ltd;
- endorsed the Council and Reporting Committees Calendar of Governance 2027–2029;

- scheduled training for Council members on Protected Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) matters;
- noted the scheduled review of the University's complaints handling processes at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee; and
- received reports on health and safety, security, governance and compliance matters.

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 *councilsecetary@mq.edu.au*.

Further Information

For further information about Council, please see:

Charter of Council

Current Macquarie University Council Members

Committees of Council

2026 Calendar of Governance