

PROFESSOR MARK HOFFMAN
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC) AND VICE-PRESIDENT

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1 April 2021

Dr Kate Hutcheon
Via email: kate.hutcheon@health.wa.gov.au

Dear Dr Hutcheon

I write to you in my capacity as the nominated Responsible Executive Officer as per the University's [Research Breach Investigation Procedure](#) (Procedure) regarding the complaint submitted relating to an article published in *Agronomy* in 2019 titled *Further Disruption of the TAS3 Pathway via the Addition of the AGO7 Mutation to the DRB1, DRB2 or DRB4 Mutations Severely Impairs the Reproductive Competence of Arabidopsis thaliana* (Publication).

The complaint alleged that portions of your higher degree by research thesis was used in the Publication without permission or attribution. In accordance with the Procedure, a preliminary assessment was initiated to review the complaint. The preliminary assessment indicated that potential breaches of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (Code) may have occurred, the complaint was referred to investigation, and an Investigation Panel was convened.

Following the conclusion of the investigation, an Investigation Panel Report was provided to the Designated Officer, Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, interim Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, and then referred to me for decision.

I have considered and accepted the findings in the Investigation Panel Report that breaches of Responsibilities 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 25 and 27 of the Code have occurred. Based on the Investigation Panel recommendations, corrective actions are to be implemented in response to the findings. The corrective actions include:

- prompt request for retraction of the Publication and update of the researchers' research profiles;
- audit of laboratory practices;
- research integrity mentoring and training; and
- supervisor education.

The Investigation Panel made further recommendations that the University will be reviewing in full, relating to the introduction of laboratory notation guidelines, ensuring the effectiveness of internal research integrity training, and reviewing information provided to higher degree by research candidates and supervisors regarding intellectual property.

Should you have any queries with regard to the above, in the first instance please contact researchintegrity@newcastle.edu.au.

Please note a request for a review of an investigation will only be considered on the grounds that the Procedure has not been properly followed, and will be in accordance with the University's [Complaint and Grievance Policy](#) (see Procedure, Section 6).

Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of the University, and for your engagement throughout the process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hoffman', written in a cursive style.

Mark Hoffman
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice-President
Nominated Responsible Executive Officer