

Chair:
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Senator Gavin Marshall
Chair
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
PO Box 6100
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Dear Senator Marshall

RE: Inquiry into Academic Freedom


Universities Australia wishes to thank the Committee for the invitation to make this submission to the Senate Inquiry into Academic Freedom.

Universities have a special role as institutions dedicated to free, open and critical expression across the full scope of human knowledge and endeavour. Central to this role is the freedom of staff and students to teach, research, debate and learn independent of external political circumstance and pressure.

Universities Australia strongly defends the right of universities to employ academic staff based on academic merit and not based on particular cultural, political, or ideological views. Within disciplines, universities employ academic staff based on the knowledge they possess and the quality of their thinking, not for what they think. Similarly, Universities Australia defends the ability and obligation of universities to teach students how to think, not what to think, and wishes to express its confidence in students' powers to reach their own conclusions on matters of ideological debate.

In a free and democratic society there is no place for external interference in the intellectual endeavours of scholars.

Yours sincerely



Professor Richard Larkins AO
Chair

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