

**SENATE**  
**EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE**  
**RELATIONS AND EDUCATION**  
**COMMITTEE**

***INQUIRY INTO ACADEMIC FREEDOM***

**A SUBMISSION BY MERVYN F BENDLE PhD**  
**SENIOR LECTURER IN HISTORY & COMMUNICATIONS**  
**JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY**  
**September 2008**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **OBJECTIVE OF THIS SUBMISSION**

This submission directly addresses the following issues of concern to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education committee Inquiry into Academic Freedom:

1. The level of intellectual diversity and the impact of ideological, political and cultural prejudice in the teaching of senior secondary education and courses at Australian universities.
2. The need for the teaching of senior secondary and university courses to reflect a plurality of views, be accurate, fair, balanced and in context; and
3. Ways in which intellectual diversity and contestability of ideas may be promoted and protected, including the concept of a charter of academic freedoms.

## **STRUCTURE OF THIS SUBMISSION**

This submission has three parts:

Part One provides the necessary information on the background and experience of the author.

Part Two provides a case study of an attempt by an academic to stifle academic freedom regarding the debate about research and teaching relating to terrorism studies.

Part Three provides a more general discussion of academic freedom in Australia, including some proposals for reform.

## **PART ONE:**

### **THE BACKGROUND OF THE AUTHOR**

#### **THE AUTHOR**

Mervyn F. Bendle Ph.D  
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School of Arts & Social Science  
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[www.faess.jcu.edu.au/soh/staff/mervyn.bendle.html](http://www.faess.jcu.edu.au/soh/staff/mervyn.bendle.html)

#### **ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Doctor of Philosophy (Comparative Religion) (1996) LaTrobe University.
2. Master of Arts (Psychoanalytic Studies). (1999) Deakin University.
3. Master of Arts (Social Theory). (1991) Monash University.

4. Master of Arts (Religion Studies). (1990) LaTrobe University.
5. Bachelor of Arts (First Class Honours) (Religion Studies/History) (1988) LaTrobe University.
6. Graduate Diploma in Urban Sociology (1979) Swinburne University of Technology.
7. Diploma of Education 1976 (La Trobe University)
8. Bachelor of Arts (History and Sociology) 1975 (LaTrobe University)

### **PUBLICATIONS**

A list of publications is attached as an Appendix to this submission.

### **RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE**

- 16 years as a university lecturer and senior lecturer.
- Teaching experience at university level in history, sociology, criminology, education, communications, journalism, and cinema.
- Continual contact with thousands of undergraduate university students, including first year students, extending over 16 years.
- 5 years experience as a teacher in a high school, a technical college, and a grammar school.
- 10 years as public servant in both the Victorian and Commonwealth Public Services, working in relatively senior positions.

### **RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

1. Extensive research and publication record in the history of radical theory and extremist thought (including terrorism) in Australia and overseas with a particular focus on the universities.
2. The author is one of a very small number of academics or researchers who has undertaken a systematic study of the origins and rise to dominance of the currently prevailing radical left-wing orthodoxy in Australian universities (and hence Australian secondary schools, via the influence of university-based schools of education) in the four decades since the 1960s.
3. I have engaged in public debate around these issues for some time, as the articles written by me listed below indicate.
4. Relevant publications of mine arising from this research program include the following:
  1. "Radical pacifists deny a murderous reality", *The Australian*, 22 September 2008, p. 10.
  2. "The Prehistory of '68: The Birth of the Australian Intelligentsia", *Quadrant*, Forthcoming October 2008.
  3. "Hijacking Terrorism Studies in Australia", *Quadrant*, Forthcoming September 2008.
  4. "How to be a 'Useful Idiot': Saudi Funding Part 2" *National Observer*, Forthcoming 2008.
  5. "America as the New Rome", *Quadrant*, No.446, May 2008.
  6. "Seduction of Saudi cash is Faustian pact for Unis", *The Australian*, 29 April 2008, p. 14.
  7. "Indicting Liberal Democracy for Genocide", *Quadrant*, No.444, March 2008.

8. "The Origins of the Radical Intelligentsia in Australia in the 'Sixties", *National Observer* No.75, Summer 2007/08.
9. "Secret Saudi Funding of Radical Islamic Groups in Australia", *National Observer* No.72, Autumn 2007.
10. "A Fiercely Open Book", *The Australian Literary Review*, 2(11), December 2007
11. "Terrorism and the New Left in the 'Sixties", *National Observer*, No. 71, Summer 2006/07.
12. "Status quo defence fails," *The Australian*, September 20 2006, p.31.
13. "9-11: treason in the academic comfort zone?" *On-line Opinion* 11 September 2006.
14. "Don't Mention the Terror," *The Australian*, September 6 2006, p.25.
15. "The History Wars: now for the hard part," *On-line Opinion* 23 August 2006.
16. "Ties that should bind," *The Australian*, August 2 2006, p.37.
17. "History never retreats," *The Australian*, July 21 2006, p.14.
18. "Existential Terrorism: Civil Society and its Enemies," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. 52(1), 2006, pp.114-29.
19. "The Apocalyptic Imagination and Popular Culture", *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*. XI, Fall, 2005.
20. "Militant Religion and the Crisis of Modernity," *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 14, 2003.
21. "Global Jihad and the Battle for the Soul of Islam," *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 16(2) Spring, 2003.
22. "Trajectories of Anti-Globalism," *Journal of Sociology*, 38(3), September 2002.
23. "The Crisis of 'Identity' in High Modernity," *British Journal of Sociology*, 53(1), March 2002.
24. "Foucault, Religion and Governmentality," *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 15(1), Autumn 2002.
25. "Militant Religion and Globalization," *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 15(1), Autumn 2002.
26. "The War on Terrorism and the Role of Schools," *Prime Focus*, 29, April 2002.
27. "Being Critical in a Globalized World," *Australian Psychologist*, 36(1), April 2001.
28. "The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy" *Journal of Sociology*, 35(2), August 1999.
29. "The Death of the Sociology of Deviance", *Journal of Sociology*, 35(1), March 1999.
30. "Logics of Integration and Disintegration in Contemporary Social Theory," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 32(3), November 1996.

## **PART TWO:**

### **A CASE STUDY IN THE ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

I.

While this submission was being prepared (15/9/2008) I became the target of a concerted attack by another academic, Associate Professor Anthony Burke, of the Australian Defence Force Academy, apparently working on behalf of himself and several other academics. The ferocity of this attack and the time it demanded of me delayed the preparation of this submission, which is therefore not as detailed as I had intended it to be.

Dr Burke wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of James Cook University, where I work demanding that I be charged with serious academic misconduct, because of my depiction of his theories of terrorism in a recent article in the monthly literary journal *Quadrant*.

The article, "Hijacking Terrorism Studies", can be found at Quadrant Online:  
<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2008/9/hijacking-terrorism-studies>

Dr Burke's letter is included below.

Note that he never sent a copy of this letter to me nor did he inform me of his complaint to my Vice-Chancellor and Head of Department.

Dr Burke is an associate professor at the Australian Defence Force Academy, where he teaches Australia's military personnel, a position that requires the highest level of academic responsibility and carries an obligation to be accountable for one's views.

My article criticized Dr Burke's position on terrorism, an important area of military and public concern where he has deliberately acquired a very high profile.

This article was written after considerable research and provided an extensive review of the work of Dr Burke and these parties, and disclosed that it appeared to be characterized by a desire to downplay the danger represented to Western societies by Islamist and jihadist terrorists in favour of a view that held, inter alia, Western societies primarily responsible for terrorism.

Such concerns are of course highly relevant given the recent conviction in Victoria of a group of Muslim men found guilty of being part of a home-grown terrorist cell plotting to wage violent jihad on Australian soil, including mounting massive bombing attacks on the AFL Grand Final and Crown Casino.

Such an article is therefore a premier example of how reasoned and comprehensive academic analysis can inform the public on crucial issues.

Nevertheless, despite this obvious public interest and the clear evidence that some Muslims were (very regrettably) attracted to terrorism and jihadi activity, Dr Burke condemned my article in a letter sent directly to the Vice-Chancellor of James Cook University, urging her to “consider a formal and transparent investigation by JCU as to whether or not it constitutes a case of serious academic misconduct” that could lead to severe punishment for myself, including suspension or even dismissal from the University.

Another Canberra academic, Dr Paul Pickering of the Australian national University, wrote direct to my Head of Department, also insisting that I be punished for writing this article that also criticized his work.

Please note also that Dr Burke conceded in a newspaper article that “Dr Bendle had quoted him [i.e., Dr Burke] accurately” (Jamie Walker, “Uni row the new front in culture war”, *The Weekend Australian*, 20-21/9/2008, p.2), and that therefore he has no grounds for claiming as he did that I had misrepresented him.

It needs to be emphasized that these academics did not approach me at all with their concerns, instead going over my head with their complaints.

They made no attempt to engage with me intellectually but instead sought to have me disciplined for criticizing their positions on terrorism and related issues.

Traditionally, it has been a basic rule of academic etiquette for parties in an academic dispute to respect the right of free inquiry and free speech. Dr Burke and the other complainants could easily have emailed or telephoned me with their concerns and I would have done everything possible to reach some compromise with them.

Also, they could easily have responded in any number of journals to which they have access.

Moreover, Dr Burke is the publisher of his own electronic journal, and he could easily have used this to respond in an appropriate manner to the criticisms made by myself.

Instead they made no attempt to contact me and instead went over my head and straight to the CEO of my university, virtually demanding that I be charged with serious academic misconduct, while also threatening legal action.

In addition, Associate Professor Burke also took the opportunity to denigrate my expertise to the Vice-Chancellor of my university, when it is clear that he has no idea of the substantial work I have done over the past seven years since the 9/11 attacks.

Indeed, in that period I have published some 25 academic & newspaper articles and conference papers on terrorism and related topics. In fact, I published an article about 9/11 only a week after the event. I have also taught the History of Terrorism at 2nd & 3rd year university level for the past 4 years – pioneering this subject in Australia.

One article of mine My article "Existential Terrorism: Civil Society and its Enemies," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. 52(1), 2006, pp.114-29 is listed on the *Australian Journal of Politics and History* website as one of the Top 5 AJPH articles accessed on-line.

Indeed, I believe that a comparison of my work with the work of the complainants would indicate that mine is superior to their work, and yet they felt free to make damaging comments about my capacities to the Vice Chancellor of my university, in addition to trying to get me severely punished for criticizing their approach to terrorism.

Dr Burke's letter is also extremely condescending and dismissive of my work in a quite unwarranted way designed again to belittle me to my Vice-Chancellor.

He makes aspirations about my "integrity and honesty" of my research, again in a completely unwarranted fashion and without providing any supporting evidence for such damaging claims.

Absurdly, he claims also that "Dr. Bendle offers no evidence whatsoever", when in fact my article provided literally scores of direct quotations from the work of Dr Burke and his allies. This is again an attempt to deliberately and falsely denigrate me to my Vice-Chancellor.

He complains that "Dr. Bendle does not appear to have expertise or training in international relations or security affairs" (which apparently Dr Burke has), as if these and only these qualifications entitle an academic to write about terrorism.

Dr Burke doesn't explain why international relations is any more relevant to the study of terrorism than other qualifications, such as those that I possess.

In fact, my involvement in the academic study of Islamist and other forms of terrorism builds on my PhD studies in comparative religion, particularly into the nature and consequences of religious difference, coupled with my teaching and research in criminology, the study of deviance, sociology, history and social theory over many years.

I have eight tertiary qualifications, including a PhD and three MAs.

These qualifications are easily superior to those held by Dr Burke, and arguably more relevant, especially in connection with the study of religious terrorism and the application of social theory.

Also, as I pointed out above, in the past seven years I have published some 25 academic & newspaper articles and conference papers on terrorism and related topics and I have also taught the History of Terrorism at 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year university level for the past 4 years. My article "Existential Terrorism: Civil Society and its Enemies," *Australian Journal of*

*Politics and History*. 52(1), 2006, pp.114-29 is listed on the *Australian Journal of Politics and History* website as one of the Top 5 AJPH articles accessed on-line.

Dr Burke also makes the very damaging allegation that “This case of Dr. Bendle’s *Quadrant* article seems to be identical in nature” to an article of “a physical scientist [who] falsified data, or made conclusions in a paper which were said to be supported by data but were in fact not supported by that data”, i.e., he accused me in a letter to my Vice-Chancellor of being an academic fraud.

He also clearly implies falsely that my article fails to “meet accepted standards of research quality, professionalism, and data integrity”.

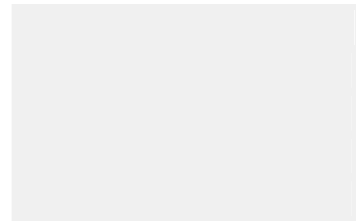
He insists to my Vice-Chancellor that “the protection of the integrity of James Cook University’s research reputation” requires her to take action against me.

All of these false and unfounded claims and allegations by Dr Burke were designed to harm me to the greatest extent possible in this letter to my Vice-Chancellor and amount to a concerted effort to deny me the academic freedom necessary to engage in proper debate over an issue of great public concern – terrorism.

Please note that the use of such tactics to prevent the discussion of Islamist terrorism is very prevalent overseas, where legal action is being used to force books to be withdrawn and pulped because they reveal details of the financial networks that fund international jihadism and Islamist terrorism.

Clearly, Dr Burke’s attack on me over a magazine article criticizing his position in an important area of public concern where he has deliberately acquired a very high profile threatens the traditional values of academic freedom and debate.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANTHONY BURKE’S LETTER TO THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY 15/9/2008



Cc: Professor Janet Greeley  
Pro-Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences

Dear Professor Harding



I write to you regarding a serious matter involving Dr. Mervyn Bendle, a senior lecturer in JCU's School of Humanities.

Attached is an article Dr. Bendle published in the September 2008 edition of the journal *Quadrant*, entitled "Hijacking terrorism studies". This article purports to be a scholarly and credible meta-theoretical analysis of the writings of a range of scholars in terrorism studies in Australian universities, and presents a range of his opinions as research findings about the quality and implications of that research. Dr. Bendle publishes the article under his academic affiliation at James Cook University. I do not know if Dr. Bendle intends to claim the article as a DEST or non-DEST publication, but it is clear that the article is presented as a scholarly essay that presents research findings of some urgency and importance.

One of the claims in the article to my mind raises serious concerns about the integrity and honesty of Dr. Bendle's research. I am not aware of what your processes are in such cases, but you may wish to consider a formal and transparent investigation by JCU as to whether or not it constitutes a case of serious academic misconduct.

The claim comes on pages 37 and 41, which is that myself, the ANU's Dr. Paul Pickering and 'other academics' have 'relentless sympathy for terrorists', 'defend the Islamist terrorists who conducted the July 2005 London bombings', and are generally 'pro-terrorist'.

You will appreciate that this claim by Dr. Bendle is indeed a grave and serious charge, which needs to be supported by the clearest possible evidence.

In fact, Dr. Bendle offers no evidence whatsoever, and indeed should have been aware of numerous instances – both in the works he cites, and in other of my own publications which are publicly listed on my staff webpage – that directly contradict his assertions. I, for example, have repeatedly argued that terrorism is an immoral, unjustifiable and politically counter-productive form of violence.

Dr. Bendle's completely fallacious assertions are presented as research findings, using a university affiliation and implying professionally-endorsed training and expertise. Based on his educational qualifications, publications and stated teaching responsibilities, Dr. Bendle does not appear to have expertise or training in international relations or security affairs. Had a physical scientist falsified data, or made conclusions in a paper which were said to be supported by data but were in fact not supported by that data, there would be serious consequences. There are sadly numerous cases of such conduct around the world, as has been reported in publications such as the *Guardian* and *New Scientist*. This case of Dr. Bendle's *Quadrant* article seems to be identical in nature.

I urge you to give consideration to how James Cook University should respond to Dr. Bendle's conduct. It would seem important for the protection of the integrity of James Cook University's research reputation that this occurs.

I will be happy to provide a panel or review with copies of my own writings which demonstrate the misleading nature of Dr. Bendle's research findings, as would others who are mentioned in such terms in the article by Dr. Bendle.

Dr. Pickering, in response to his earlier correspondence with the Head of the School of Humanities, Associate-Professor Lansdown, was told that Dr. Bendle enjoyed academic freedom and that we should seek normal avenues of response. We are pursuing a right of reply. Whilst I fail to understand how academic freedom includes the right to make unsubstantiated and potentially defamatory imputations, Professor Lansdown's understandable response is beside the point I am making to you in this letter.

Dr. Bendle's claims are presented under his university affiliation as research findings in a scholarly essay, and they must meet accepted standards of research quality, professionalism, and data integrity.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Burke

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## II.

This case study of an attack on academic freedom involves an attempt by Dr Anthony Burke of the Australian Defence Force Academy to have me punished and a threat of legal action over an article I wrote criticizing his approach to the study of terrorism. It duly came to the notice of the media, with, e.g., Dr Burke providing them with a copy of his letter of complaint about me (a letter he never sent to me).

At this point (19/9/2008), I was contacted by the Director, Media and External Relations, of my university informing me that it had been "decided this was a matter of debate between academics putting their views and opinions forward in the interests of discourse and dialogue. Dr Bendle has stated his position and it is now open for others to state theirs". Note also that it says that "Associate Professor Burke today (Sept 19) has withdrawn his request to JCU for an investigation." (see below)

EMAIL TO ME FROM THE JCU DIRECTOR, MEDIA AND EXTERNAL  
RELATIONS (19/9/2008)

Mervyn

I was contacted by Jamie Walker from the Australian today re the Quadrant article and subsequent "comments" by other academics. On behalf of the Uni I sent him this comment:

Jamie

here's our comment:

"A spokesperson for JCU said that as an official complaint was made to the Vice Chancellor some advice was sought but it was decided this was a matter of debate between academics putting their views and opinions forward in the interests of discourse and dialogue.

Dr Bendle has stated his position and it is now open for others to state theirs.

It should be noted that Associate Professor Burke today (Sept 19) has withdrawn his request to JCU for an investigation."

regards Jim

--

Jim O'Brien  
Director Media and External Relations  
Division of International & Engagement  
James Cook University  
Townsville  
QLD, Australia 4811

III.

Following this email, an article about Dr Burke's attack on me then appeared in *The Weekend Australian*, outlining my position and that of Dr Burke (Jamie Walker, "Uni row the new front in culture war", *The Weekend Australian*, 20-21/9/2008, pp.1-2).

Note that in this article Dr Burke conceded that I had not misquoted him. He also claimed that he had withdrawn his complaint to the Vice-Chancellor of my university.

However, on the following day (Sunday 21/9/2008), Dr Burke sent me an email (the first and only direct contact he has made with me) re-stating his demands that I retract my article and once again threatening disciplinary and legal action. (See below)

Although his email begins in an apparently conciliatory manner, recognizing the essentially negative affects of the dispute that he had initiated, the substance of the communication involves yet another ultimatum, demanding that I retract my analysis of his position on terrorism contained in my article in *Quadrant* magazine.

His basic argument is that he simply asserts that my analysis of his position on terrorism (and that of his associates) is wrong – but he makes no attempt to show how this is the case nor does he engage with the arguments I put forward in my 7000-word article. The only token gesture he makes at refutation is a reference to his books, which I had already analysed in developing my case against his position on terrorism.

Shamefully and outrageously, he invokes the painful situation of a Bali bombing survivor reported in another newspaper article, as if I were responsible for this person's tragic situation.

In his email, Dr Burke demanded that I “issue a statement and have it press released nationally through James Cook University”. “I also wish you to publish it in *Quadrant*”, Dr Burke instructed.

Dr Burke included a statement that he demanded I release, under the threat of administrative and legal action.

Dr Burke also dictated the following “terms for release” to me:

“The statement should be issued in a press release to all state and national media as soon as possible Monday 22 September 2008, by the Public Relations office of James Cook University on their letterhead. The statement should also be emailed to Jamie Walker at the Australian and Eleni Hale at the Herald-Sun, with a request to publicise it.

“The statement, minus the reference to the press articles, should also be published in the next available print edition of *Quadrant* (I believe it is November), and as soon as possible on its website.

“The statement should also be sent to the editor or author of any website or blog which repeats the claims, and every effort should be made by yourself to have them removed.”

His email also contained demands for various very onerous tasks for me to perform in order to prevent Dr Burke taking action against me. For example, these involved the demand that my “statement [of retraction of my views] should also be sent to the editor or author of any website or blog which repeats the claims, and every effort should be made by yourself to have them removed”.

Dr Burke also threatened me again, stating that “should you reject my request to issue the statement, we will pursue the request at the UNSW to JCU official level”. And he concluded by warning me that “Should you continue to reject the request following that, defamation proceedings against yourself remain an option”.

Understandably, given Dr Burke’s earlier decision to withdraw his threat of action, I was quite shocked at this resumption of hostilities with all the threats of disciplinary and legal action. I had always maintained that the issue should have been handled like any other dispute between academics, with vigorous debate on both sides. the resumption of hostilities by Dr Burke.

When he withdrew his initial complaint, I thought he had recognized that this constant harassment was not the way to go. What I can’t understand is why Dr Burke doesn’t just defend himself like any other academic, by publishing an article rebutting my claims.

After all, Dr Burke publishes his own journal and has every opportunity to show why my argument was mistaken.

#### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANTHONY BURKE’S EMAIL TO ME 15/9/2008

Dear Dr. Bendle,

You will have seen Saturday's Australian newspaper, and I hope you might agree that this dispute between us has gotten quite out of hand. I would like to take you up on your comments there that we should sort this out reasonably between us.

I am writing to ask you to issue a statement and have it press released nationally through James Cook University. I also wish you to publish it in Quadrant. I will include a text acceptable to me, and explain my reasons, below.

However wrong I believe your interpretation, in September's Quadrant, of the work of myself and the contributors to Bowden and Davis, you have every right to criticise us on its substance and approach. As

you say, that's academic freedom.

My concern is the claims you have made that I had 'relentless sympathy for terrorists', that Paul Pickering defended the London bombers, and that we and 'other academics' were 'pro-terrorist'.

These allegations are untrue. They also have the potential to cause us serious damage. This potential for damage is already increasing, given that this Sunday Eleni Hale from the Herald-Sun published an article drawing upon and amplifying the allegations. Indeed she presented them to a Bali bombing victim to elicit a comment. You would understand how hurtful this would be to one of the victims.

Your claims are not supported by anything said in the Bowden and Davis book, and they are directly refuted in my books *Beyond Security* *Ethics and Violence* and *Fear of Security*, as they are in numerous scholarly articles of mine. Should you be in doubt, I refer you to page 67 of *Beyond Security*, which states: "One understandable purpose of the [separation] wall is to provide Israelis with better security against the deeply immoral, politically misguided and strategically disastrous Palestinian campaign of suicide attacks waged inside the pre-1967 borders of Israel..". I would also refer you to pages 84 and 162, and to my article "The end of terrorism studies", in *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1(1), 2008, which makes a sustained argument about the immorality and illegitimacy of terrorism, and the need to de-legitimise it among communities susceptible to radicalisation.

Immediately below I set out the statement and my terms for its release.

The statement should read as follows:

"STATEMENT BY DR. MERVYN BENDLE, JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

I refer to my article "Hijacking terrorism studies", published in the September 2008 issue of *Quadrant* magazine, and to the articles about myself and Dr. Anthony Burke in *The Weekend Australian* of 20-21 September and the *Herald-Sun* of 21 September.

Those articles claimed or implied that Dr. Burke, Dr. Paul Pickering and Dr. Brett Bowden had sympathy for, or had defended, terrorists. I acknowledge that these claims were false and unsupported by evidence. I also accept that Dr. Burke has in his books and numerous articles stated that terrorism is an immoral and illegitimate form of political violence.

I regret and apologise for these untrue claims, and any distress they have caused."

My terms for release:

-The statement should be issued in a press release to all state and national media as soon as possible Monday 22 September 2008, by the Public Relations office of James Cook University on their letterhead. The statement should also be emailed to Jamie Walker at the Australian and Eleni Hale at the *Herald-Sun*, with a request to publicise it.

-The statement, minus the reference to the press articles, should also be published in the next available print edition of *Quadrant* (I believe it is November), and as soon as possible on its website.

-The statement should also be sent to the editor or author of any website or blog which repeats the claims, and every effort should be made by yourself to have them removed.

Should you reject my request to issue the statement, we will pursue the request at the UNSW to JCU official level.

Should you continue to reject the request following that, defamation proceedings against yourself remain an option. However I assure you that I wish to avoid such proceedings. You can also be assured that if you issue the statement as drafted, and in the manner requested, it would serve to satisfy all claims that may be

raised by myself in such an action.

Regards

Anthony Burke

Dr. Anthony Burke  
Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations  
The University of New South Wales at The Australian Defence Force Academy  
Canberra ACT 2602 Australia  
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Tel: +61 (0)412 420 656

What really worries me is that this type of harassing strategy is so similar to that used overseas, where legal action is being used to force books to be withdrawn and pulped because they reveal details of the financial networks that fund international jihadism and Islamist terrorism.

Clearly, threats like these being made by Dr Burke are putting Australian universities on notice, either they protect academic freedom or the intellectual life of our country will die.

### **PART THREE:**

## **GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AUSTRALIA**

**TOPIC 1: The level of intellectual diversity and the impact of ideological, political and cultural prejudice in the teaching of senior secondary education and courses at Australian universities.**

- I have had the opportunity to read the submission of Dr Kevin Donnelly to Senate Inquiry (posted on the Inquiry website), and I state here that I believe Dr Donnelly's description and analysis of the situation is both comprehensive and correct in all essentials. Consequently, I will refrain from repeating what Dr Donnelly has so ably put to the Inquiry and instead associate myself with his views, and restrict myself to key points.
- There is very little intellectual diversity in Australian universities, especially in the schools and faculties of the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education.
- These areas are dominated by a radical left-wing orthodoxy that originated in the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and rapidly increased in influence over the subsequent four decades.
- This radical orthodoxy is composed to an almost slavish adherence to various theories and political commitments associated with neo-Marxism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, the theories of Michel Foucault, post-structuralism, discourse theory, feminism, neo-Rousseauianism, radical environmentalism, anti-Americanism, anti-Christianity, and related ideologies.

- In particular, this radical orthodoxy is characterized by:
  - Social constructionism, according to which reality is ‘socially constructed’ through language and ‘discourse’;
  - Cultural relativism, according to which there is no reliable measure of truth and all values and attitudes are of equal worth.
  - A hatred of mainstream society, which is regarded as wicked, evil, exploitative, patriarchal, racist, unjust, etc, etc.
  - A love of the marginal and the deviant, which are represented as being victimized by mainstream society.
  - Anti-scientific attitudes, regarding science as a mere ideology indistinguishable from the cultural practices of magic.
- This radical orthodoxy dominates research programs, publications, and text books at all levels and therefore influences every aspect of education in Australia.
- This radical orthodoxy became entrenched in the 1980s and 1990s as older academics retired or were forced out and the younger cohort of radicalized academics rose to senior academic and administrative positions, and mentored, employed, and promoted colleagues and students who adhered to its values, attitudes, and theoretical orientation.
- This process had become self-perpetuating by the 1990s, by which time academics adhering to the radical orthodoxy in these areas had attained positions of great influence in the various agencies, committees and other bodies determining education curricula through out Australia.
- This radical orthodoxy has lost whatever intellectual power and relevance it might once have had and has now become decadent and complacent and is now largely parroted by academics and their students anxious to conform to its tenets.

**TOPIC 2: The need for the teaching of senior secondary and university courses to reflect a plurality of views, be accurate, fair, balanced and in context.**

- There is a great need for the stranglehold of this radical orthodoxy to be broken for the following reasons:
  - Culturally, it is suffocating academic life in Australia, allowing no toleration of alternative approaches.
  - Intellectually, it is obsolete and decadent and serves as little more than a justifying ideology for the senior academics and administrators who built their careers through their allegiance to it.
  - Socially, it is intrinsically antagonistic to the values of Australian society, both as they are enshrined in our constitution and institutions and as they find expression in the day-to-day activities of average Australians.



- Politically, it encourages and promotes far-left political values, attitudes, and behaviour based on theories and ideologies that are both wrong and obsolete, and antagonistic to the pluralist political system of Australia's liberal democracy.
- Psychologically, it promotes and even requires a high level of cynicism amongst both its academic devotees, and students, who are basically heartily sick of the dominant role played by the radical orthodoxy in their education from primary to tertiary levels.
- Economically, it makes no sense to allow this radical orthodoxy to continue its dominant reign within the education system as it is both entirely unproductive, and a waste of :
  - The massive financial resources invested in the university systems, as it is not only unproductive in terms of wealth creation, but it antagonistic towards the view should be so productive.
  - The human resources committed to its perpetuation, especially the time and intellectual effort not only of its academic devotees, but also the tens of thousands of students whose education, intellectual and cultural life is shaped by it.

**TOPIC 3: Ways in which intellectual diversity and contestability of ideas may be promoted and protected, including the concept of a charter of academic freedoms.**

- Universities should declare their unequivocal commitment to the principles of academic and intellectual freedom, and the freedom of speech, and they should be penalized when and if they fall short of observing these principles.
- An academic charter could provide some protection but it would have to be carefully drafted, as experience shows that control over such mechanisms can be captured and misused by precisely those people whose destructive practices they are meant to combat. For example, anti-workplace harassment laws are used by workplace harassers against innocent workers who are targeted in what is now called 'workplace mobbing'. Similarly, the Victorian Bill of Rights has been misused for inappropriate purposes. Freedom-of-information laws are also being abused, e.g., by students demanding access to exam papers and marking criteria.
- Another possible measure would be to tackle the problem at its root by demanding of universities that they are able to demonstrate a high level of diversity of academic theories, methods, and practices amongst their staff, especially in the Arts, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education, and also Law.
- Universities should be required to demonstrate that they have in place mechanisms that ensure there is regular and robust debate amongst academics about the central issues facing our society, e.g., terrorism, climate change, immigration, multiculturalism, education, etc. Moreover, these debates should be publicized and made open to the public.

- Universities should also be required to demonstrate that their staff conduct research, publish, and hold and attend conferences that reflect the widest possible diversity of views in the disciplines concerned.
- Similarly, universities should also be required to demonstrate that their staff conduct research, publish, and hold and attend conferences that reflect the ideas, concerns, activities, behaviours, values, attitudes, and practices of the ‘mainstream’ of Australian society and not only marginal groups and ideas.
- Financial provision be made to encourage the early retirement of academics who may feel uncomfortable under such a system ensuring a diversity of views, but that no compulsion be applied.
- The Australian Research Council’s role in awarding grants that promote and sustain the homogeneity of research in Australia must be reviewed with the intention of ensuring that a greater diversity of approaches Arts, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education, and also Law is fully supported by ARC.

## **APPENDIX**

### **PUBLICATIONS OF MERVYN F BENDLE PhD**

(Note: Many conference papers, dozens of letters to the editor and newspaper articles are not included)

1. “Radical pacifists deny a murderous reality”, *The Australian*, 22 September 2008, p. 10.
2. “The Prehistory of ’68: The Birth of the Australian Intelligentsia”, *Quadrant*, Forthcoming October 2008.
3. “Hijacking Terrorism Studies in Australia”, *Quadrant*, Forthcoming September 2008.
4. “How to be a ‘Useful Idiot’: Saudi Funding Part 2” *National Observer*, Forthcoming 2008.
5. “America as the New Rome”, *Quadrant*, No.446, May 2008.
6. “Seduction of Saudi cash is Faustian pact for Unis”, *The Australian*, 29 April 2008, p. 14.
7. “Indicting Liberal Democracy for Genocide”, *Quadrant*, No.444, March 2008.
8. “The Origins of the Radical Intelligentsia in Australia in the ‘Sixties”, *National Observer* No.75, Summer 2007/08.
9. “Secret Saudi Funding of Radical Islamic Groups in Australia”, *National Observer* No.72, Autumn 2007.
10. “A Fiercely Open Book”, *The Australian Literary Review*, 2(11), December 2007
11. “Terrorism and the New Left in the ‘Sixties”, *National Observer*, No. 71, Summer 2006/07.
12. “Status quo defence fails,” *The Australian*, September 20 2006, p.31.
13. “9-11: treason in the academic comfort zone?” *On-line Opinion* 11 September 2006.
14. “Don’t Mention the Terror,” *The Australian*, September 6 2006, p.25.
15. “The History Wars: now for the hard part,” *On-line Opinion* 23 August 2006.
16. “Ties that should bind,” *The Australian*, August 2 2006, p.37.
17. “History never retreats,” *The Australian*, July 21 2006, p.14.
18. “Slavoj Zizek, *The Parallax View*”. (Review Article) *Screening the Past*. 20, 2006.

19. "Existential Terrorism: Civil Society and its Enemies," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. 52(1), 2006, pp.114-29.
20. "The Apocalyptic Imagination and Popular Culture", *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*. XI, Fall, 2005.
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23. "From Alien to The Matrix: *Reading science fiction film*." (Review) *Screening the Past*. 19, 2006.
24. "Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism (1905): A Centennial Essay", *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 18(2), 2005.
25. "Theories of Existential Terrorism: A Comparative Study of Russia and Germany, c.1870-1940." Paper given at the XVth Biennial Conference of the Australasian Association for European History, Melbourne University July 2005.
26. "American science fiction TV: Star Trek, Stargate and beyond", (Review) *Screening the Past*. Issue 18. 2005.
27. "Everyday Apocalypse and the Cultural Rearmament of America." Paper given at the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia Annual Conference 9-11 December 2004.
28. "Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture," (Review) *Journal of Sociology*, 40(3) September 2004
29. "In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification," (Review) *Journal of Sociology*, 40(2) June 2004
30. "Cultural Expressions of Evil and Wickedness: Wrath, Sex, Crime," (Review) *Screening the Past*, Issue 16, 2004,
31. "Interactionism," (Review) *Journal of Sociology*, 40(1), March 2004
32. "A History and Theory of the Social Sciences," (Review) *Journal of Sociology*, 39(4), December 2003
33. "The Theory of Existential Terrorism." Paper given at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual ANZSOC Conference: Sydney 1-3 October 2003 - Theme: Controlling Crime: Risks and Responsibilities
34. "Militant Religion and the Crisis of Modernity," *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 14, 2003.
35. "Global Jihad and the Battle for the Soul of Islam," *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 16(2) Spring, 2003.
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39. "Everyday Terrorism: Civil Society and its Enemies." Paper given at 16th Annual ANZSOC Conference: Brisbane 1-3 October 2002, - Theme: Preventing Crime and Doing Justice
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46. "Militant Religion and Globalization," *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 15(1), Autumn 2002.
47. "Teleportation, Cyborgs and the Posthuman Ideology," *Social Semiotics*, 12(1), April 2002.
48. "Science Fiction Film," *Screening the Past*, Issue 14, 2002,
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51. "Militant Religion and Global Power." Paper given at the Australian Sociological Association Annual Conference, University of Sydney, 13-15 December, 2001.
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59. "Struggles for Subjectivity: Identity, Action and Youth Experience." (Review) *Journal of Sociology*, 36(3), November 2000.
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62. "Globalization, Neo-Humanism and Religious Diversity" in Gary D. Bouma (ed) *Managing Religious Diversity: From Threat to Promise*, Ringwood: AASR, 1999 (ISBN 090808320 3).
63. "The Later Foucault: Politics and Philosophy" (Review) *Journal of Sociology*, 35(2), August 1999.
64. "The Death of the Sociology of Deviance", *Journal of Sociology*, 35(1), March 1999.
65. "Globalization, Neo-Humanism and Religious Diversity" *Australian Religious Studies Review*, 12(2), Autumn 1999

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*International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 8(1), 1998.
67. "The Postmetaphysics of Religious Difference", *Pacifica*, 11, February 1998.
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