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Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate

SUBMISSION TO SENATE INQUIRY INTO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

In terms of conspicuous left-wing bias in my studies, in a course I took in Semester 2 2007, the lecturer proclaimed to be disinterested in politics, yet the material she used in relation to workplace relations indicated a virulent opposition to the WorkChoices legislation and promoted unionisation. For example, we were shown a number of videos throughout the semester. One specifically dealt with how unions operate. It was a documentary produced by the ABC around 1992-1993 and followed the footsteps of a union delegate bullying a business owner into accepting unreasonable increases in wages for the workers. The lecturer was indifferent when it was later revealed that the business eventually filed for bankruptcy. A second documentary, also by the ABC (Four Corners), dealt with the original tabling of the WorkChoices legislation in 2005. Dubbed "Brave New Workplace", the documentary was evidently hostile toward the Coalition's reforms and the reporter was definitely not subtle about it.

Whilst the documentary attempted to canvass a diverse range of opinions, any viewer would be hard-pressed to walk away without holding negative opinions about the Workchoices reforms. Indeed, there were no case study interviews with people who had benefited from AWAs; instead, only aggrieved Boeing and mushroom farm workers. In other words, the lecturer used this documentary to engineer students into couching the Howard Government and Workchoices in mean-spirited and generally negative terms. When I raised this question during the lecture, the other students hissed and sniggered in a demeaning way in total acceptance of the documentary. The lecturer subsequently admitted that she was more in favour of unionisation and vague notions of equality etc

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