

s 22

From: s 22
Sent: Thursday, 25 July 2024 10:57 AM
To: s 22
Subject: FW: In confidence: University of Sydney statement [SEC=OFFICIAL]

FYI

From: Liz Hannan <liz.hannan@sydney.edu.au>
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2024 9:25 AM
To: s 22
Cc: Kirsten Andrews <kirsten.andrews@sydney.edu.au>
Subject: RE: In confidence: University of Sydney statement [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Thank you, s 22 We will certainly note that.

From: s 22
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2024 9:22 AM
To: Liz Hannan <liz.hannan@sydney.edu.au>; s 22
Subject: RE: In confidence: University of Sydney statement [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thank you Liz.

The only other thing I would flag – not for your statement – but just as an FYI is the work of the Race Discrimination Commissioner here: [Respect at uni: Study into antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and the experience of First Nations people | Ministers' Media Centre \(education.gov.au\)](https://www.education.gov.au/ministers-media-centre/first-nations-people)

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From: Liz Hannan <liz.hannan@sydney.edu.au>
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2024 8:47 AM
To: s 22
Subject: In confidence: University of Sydney statement

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Hi s 22

Please find below a statement from University of Sydney Chancellor David Thodey AO, whose term commenced on July 1, and former Chancellor Belinda Hutchinson AC.

The statement is not yet public.

I expect it to go live after 9.00 am. I will send you the link to the statement when that occurs.

Warmly,

Liz

m: **s 47F**

Chancellors' statement: Senate Inquiry and External Review

We want members of our diverse community to feel included and to have the opportunity to participate in all facets of our campus life.

Our large and vibrant university is, in many ways, a microcosm of the broader society and community, where there are unacceptable increased levels of racism and intolerance.

The Australian Government has recently announced a special envoy to counter antisemitism. There is also an intention to shortly announce a special envoy to counter Islamophobia.

Many in our community have been deeply distressed by the events of 7 October 2023, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the reverberations that are being felt around the world. We are committed to ensuring that the University:

- has a campus that is safe and welcoming for all students and staff;
- has appropriate processes and policies in place targeted at preventing discrimination and harassment;
- has effective protocols and practices to deal with allegations and acts of racism, threats to safety, hate speech, intimidation, threatening speech, bullying or unlawful harassment;
- has processes and policies that reflect best practice and are fit for purpose and the times.

In providing a safe and welcoming environment for all in our community, we also must be in a position to ensure our unwavering commitment to free speech and academic freedom as core principles of the University.

On 4 July 2024, the Coalition's bill to establish a judicial inquiry into antisemitism at Australian universities was referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee for an inquiry which will report by 4 October 2024. The University intends to cooperate with the Senate Committee's process and with the special envoy.

In addition, the University is in the process of commissioning an external review to ensure that its processes and policies are appropriate and accord with applicable standards. This review will be conducted by Bruce Hodgkinson AM SC, a preeminent Senior Counsel in New South Wales with relevant expertise including in health and safety. We anticipate this review concluding after completion of the Senate Committee inquiry and report.

The University is committed to considering and taking action, as appropriate, in response to any recommendations from the Senate Committee inquiry and the review and implementing any other measures which it determines may be appropriate to ensure high standards of discourse, conduct and behaviour on campus are met.

.. ends ..

Liz Hannan | Director, Government Relations

The University of Sydney

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Visit the University of Sydney news website for daily updates: <https://sydney.edu.au/news>

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business hours (8:30am - 5pm Canberra time) and delete all copies of this transmission together with any attachments.

Attachment E

Summary of key submissions to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
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- University of Sydney was criticised by academics for not operating in alignment with its own Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in which safety was explicitly specified as a priority over the right to protest.

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Summary of university responses to incidents since 31 October 2024

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The University of Sydney

- The University appointed leading work health safety barrister Bruce Hodgkinson SC to externally review how well its policies and processes:
 - a. safeguard the wellbeing of the University community
 - b. maintain academic freedom and freedom of speech
 - c. maintain the effective operations of the University.
- The university has resolved to accept all of the review's recommendations
- TEQSA has conducted a first site visit to University of Sydney, as part of ongoing compliance work with the University.

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Australian Government
Department of Education

To **Minister for Education**
Subject **Clare - Meeting with Sydney University VC Mark Scott and VP External Engagement Kirsten Andrews**

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Antisemitism

3. Throughout 2024, the University experienced protests and encampments in the wake of the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack.
4. In September 2024, Professor Scott acknowledged to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs inquiry that the University's response to instances of antisemitism and its management of a student encampment was inadequate, and that the University had work to do to win back the trust and confidence of the University's Jewish community.
 - Further information on antisemitism related media and legal reports related to the University is at Attachment C.
5. The University (as a member of the Group of Eight) has worked with the Special Envoy to combat antisemitism, Ms Jillian Segal AO, and Universities Australia (UA) to establish a definition of antisemitism for Australian universities.
 - s 22
6. The University's *Our Commitment to anti-racism 2025* guide endorses the inclusion of the UA agreed working definition on combatting antisemitism and confirmed it will be used by decision-makers to assess complaints of, and allegations of antisemitism.

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Comments (for MO use only)

Background on University of Sydney antisemitism on campus

- Throughout 2024, the University of Sydney experienced protests and encampments in the wake of the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack.
- Following reports concerning University of Sydney's response to safety and wellbeing concerns on campus, particularly in relation to Jewish students, on 25 July 2024 the University appointed Mr Bruce Hodgkinson AM SC to conduct an external review of its policies and processes. The University accepted all 15 of Mr Hodgkinson's review recommendations in principle in November 2024 and subsequently completed a revision of its policy framework to ban indoor protests, protest encampments, and external public members from participating in campus protests. The University also implemented a new civility rule—requiring any speaker using University facilities to make the meaning of contested words and phrases clear to the audience—to uplift campus safety.
- A class action lawsuit against the University of Sydney and two of its academics, Dr Nick Riemer and Professor John Keane, was lodged to the Federal Court on 13 June 2025. The class action alleges the University's inadequate response to campus antisemitism and the actions of Dr Riemer and Professor Keane in support of Palestine contributed to a hostile campus environment that was unsafe and harmful to the health and wellbeing of Jewish university students and staff.
- At her appearance at the New South Wales Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism on 16 June 2025, the University of Sydney Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Annamarie Jagose, defended the University's approach to managing its encampment, stating that a successful de-escalation approach had been applied to disband the encampment peacefully.
- The Daily Telegraph has reported that on 13 June 2025, the University of Sydney launched an internal investigation into its academic Dr Fahad Ali over his social media post in which he called for 'Zionists to be executed like we executed Nazis'.
- On 11 June 2025, the Guardian Australia reported that University of Sydney students overwhelmingly voted to reject university administration's adoption of the definition at a meeting convened by the Student Representative Council.

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Pages 14 to 23 deleted under s 22

If asked about the SafeWorkNSW investigation into USYD alleging it failed to protect the safety of Jewish students and staff?

All workplaces have a responsibility to ensure they are a safe place to work for all their staff.

The Albanese government has taken action to combat antisemitism, including appointing a Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism and passing laws to criminalise the Nazi salute and the public display of Nazi hate symbols.

The University of Sydney has stated it will cooperate fully with any investigation to be led by SafeWorkNSW.

The University of Sydney has also advised it has commenced a review to ensure its polices are fit to safeguard the safety, wellbeing, academic freedom, and freedom of speech of all community members, including into allegations and acts of racism, threats to safety, hate speech, intimidation, threatening speech, bullying or unlawful harassment.

As SafeWork NSW is now investigating this specific complaint, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further.

If asked about USYD's Student Representative Council vote and criticism of the Vice-Chancellor Professor Mark Scott? Should he resign?

Minister for Education

All students have a right to express their opinion.

USYD has provided assurances it is taking this matter seriously and has commenced an external review of its policies and processes to ensure they are fit to safeguard the safety, wellbeing and academic freedom of its students, staff and academic.

As autonomous institutions, the Government has no power to intervene in appointment or resignation processes.

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Pages 27 to 31 deleted under s22

Minister for Education

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Pages 33-34 deleted under s 22

If asked: what actions have universities taken?

- Following the encampment closure, USYD the University of Sydney introduced a new policy. Under the policy holding there must be three days' notice for demonstrations to be held on campus. The policy requires approval for putting up "materials, banners or structures" on campus, using megaphones or amplifiers, and erecting temporary structures. Vice-Chancellor, Mark Scott stated the policy upholds the university's commitment to free speech "while recognising we need to be able to manage our environment for the safety and security of all".

Commented [RG2]: Note reporting has indicated critics have sought advice and there is "preliminary advice" the policy may not be legal.

Pages 38-41 deleted under s 22