

Media Release

ACU upholding critical freedoms

A review of Australian universities has found that ACU is among only nine universities in the country that are compliant with federal government recommendations.

ACU developed its own free speech code as a result of the findings of an independent review of freedom of speech in Australian higher education providers conducted by last year by former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia Hon Robert French AC.

The French Report identified risks to free speech both as a fundamental right and as an element of academic freedom, due to the broad language often used by universities to frame their policies.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven said that the university's late Chancellor, the Hon John Fahey, led ACU's response to the French Report.

“Under Mr Fahey's stewardship we now have a free speech code that formalises ACU's commitment to an environment that encourages such a contest to flourish.

“As envisaged by Mr French in his associated report, ACU's code has been adapted to suit the university's characteristics and mission.”

Earlier this year Education Minister Dan Tehan appointed former Deakin Vice-Chancellor Professor Sally Walker to review Australian universities' response to the French recommendations.

Her findings, released today, found that nine universities were compliant with the code, including ACU.

“This is an important recognition of how seriously we take freedom of expression and academic freedom which is a fundamental aspect of being a university and a bedrock of our mission,” Professor Craven said.

“I am proud of our university in its approach to freedom of speech and pleased to see that our efforts to uphold these significant liberties have been recognised.”

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