



Review of Freedom of Speech in Higher Education Providers
The Hon Robert S French AC
Suite 2, Level 13
77 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 3000
Via email: freedomofspeechreview@education.gov.au

1 March 2019

Dear Justice French

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Model Code, which Deakin University believes makes a valuable contribution to clarifying important concepts of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

Deakin University endorses the response of Universities Australia to the draft Model Code.

In addition, and further to earlier communication, Deakin University's Academic Board discussed and endorsed the following response to the draft Model Code. You may observe similarities in feedback between Universities Australia and Deakin University, although expressed with varying detail.

I commend this submission to you and I welcome opportunities for Deakin representatives to speak to this submission should the need arise.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jane den Hollander'.

Professor Jane den Hollander AO
Vice-Chancellor



Deakin University

Submission

Independent Review of Freedom of Speech in Higher Education Providers

March 2019

Deakin University provides in principle support to a Model Code providing a national reference point to academic freedom and freedom of speech that could be integrated into statute and policy by universities across the sector on a voluntary basis. Deakin University believes the Model Code should align with the needs and laws of Australian society and core policy objectives of the Australian higher education system. This alignment can be achieved through a national public consultation process to inform the development of the Model Code.

Deakin University concurs with the preliminary findings of the Review into University Freedom of Speech that there is no crisis of freedom of speech or academic freedom, but does acknowledge there are challenges across the sector. Not every institution demonstrates the sophistication evident in Deakin's academic freedom and freedom of speech related policy frameworks.

Freedom of speech can rise in prominence as a result of protests at a specific place and time on specific university campuses. In Deakin's experience, protests of these kind are rare and have not proven to be a significant operational issue.

An issue more frequently warranting attention of senior staff is staff and student use of digital technologies, including educational technologies and social media. Deakin University operates at the frontier of digital learning, and is acutely aware of the social changes arising from digital technological advances.

The more pressing issue evident at the digital frontier is how best to build staff and student personal and professional capabilities to succeed in a digital world. This is a larger matter than can be addressed by a Model Code, but the underlying principles of the Draft Model Code could be better aligned with these contemporary challenges.

Deakin University would be happy to provide additional feedback on specifics structure and content of the Draft Model Code as part of a broader process of consultation.