

Executive Summary of Review Report

Queensland University of Technology

Background to Review Report

1. The Honourable John E Middleton AM KC was engaged by the Queensland University of Technology (**University**) to conduct an independent Review (**Review**) of the Carumba Institute's hosting of "*The Greatest Race Debate*" (**Debate**) and the "*National Symposium on Unifying Anti-Racist Research and Action*" (**Symposium**).
2. The Review was conducted through consideration of relevant University Policies; documentation and recording relating to the Debate and Symposium sessions; interviews with university staff, as well as third parties who attended the Debate and Symposium; and independent research and inquiry.
3. The Review focused on the events concerning and surrounding the Debate and Symposium.

Contextual observations made by the Honourable John Middleton

4. Leading up to the Debate and Symposium, various universities had experienced a significant amount of protest and unrest relating to or arising from the events of 7 October 2023 and the hostilities in the Middle East.
5. There has been a marked increase in antisemitic behaviour, and the activism and protests that have arisen out of the conflict in the Middle East have undoubtedly caused great distress for many members of the university community.
6. Freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom are part of the fabric of universities, and must be upheld to facilitate the objectives of a university. However, there are legitimate limits on freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom. These limits are imposed by appropriate university policies, and by the common law and by legislation.
7. Administrators of universities must determine, on any given situation, the balance between the appropriate exercise of the right to freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom, and conduct that is otherwise appropriately to be limited. The objectives are to ensure a safe learning and working environment and to promote the basis of a healthy dialogue within the university among people who hold a diversity of views.

Summary of key findings

The Debate

8. The Review identifies the Debate was intended to be an event where speakers expressed distressing past behaviour, but had fun at the same time, based on their own experiences.

9. While some controversy emerged following the media reporting of Ms Schwartz's and Ms Munro's Debate slides, it is important to consider the full context of the event and the presentations of both Ms Schwartz and Ms Munro. It was found the slides, when considered with the accompanying spoken words, were not antisemitic in nature nor were they offensive to those actually present at the Debate. The intent of the presentations remained aligned with the University's standards and the purpose of the Debate.
10. Ms Munro's presentation, while provocative in tone, was clearly satirical in nature and delivered within the context of a comedy event. She did not intend to promote physical aggression, but rather engage with cultural discourse through satire and exaggeration.
11. Ms Schwartz intended to critique what she perceives as the political weaponisation of Jewish identity and antisemitism by certain political leaders. She was not critical of Jewish people themselves.
12. It was found the University's Freedom of Speech Policy required that consideration was given to the content of the presentations at the Debate, and this did not occur.
13. More careful consideration should have been given to whether the Debate in January 2025 should have been conducted. When deciding to hold and proceed with the Debate, an emphasis was placed on the notion of freedom of speech and the role of universities to engage in intellectual debate. However, other relevant and important factors should have been more carefully considered including the timing of the Debate in the current social and political climate following 7 October 2023.

The Symposium

14. The Symposium brought together individuals from a range of backgrounds. Like the Debate, this included academics, activists, anti-racist practitioners, students, and other community members.
15. Prior to the events being held, there were particular concerns raised about allowing Dr Abdel Fattah to present as a speaker at the Symposium. At that time, the main concern was about the possibility (based on her previous public comments) of Dr Abdel-Fattah using hate speech of an antisemitic nature. This did not occur.
16. It was assessed by staff that the VIP Visits Policy did not apply to the Symposium, as the event was being held off-campus. It was found this assessment was incorrect.
17. There was an incident where "shame" was called out - this should not have occurred. However, there was no element of antisemitism in the incident.
18. It was concluded the organisation of the Symposium and the intent and purpose of this event aligned with the University's Code of Conduct.

List of Recommendations

19. **Recommendation One** - The Council of the University should:
 - (a) consider and define the role and function and the leadership of the Carumba Institute going forward in the future focusing on the original purpose of its establishment; and
 - (b) consider and define the supervisory control the Council and the Vice- Chancellor and President should have over the Carumba Institute, including a requirement for the Carumba Institute to report to the Council and Vice-Chancellor and President regarding public events.
20. **Recommendation Two** - The Council of the University should consider making it mandatory in respect of public events on land controlled by the University, or where the event is organised or supervised by the University, that an appropriate group of personnel be adequately informed prior to the public event of the identification of persons invited to speak or participate and an indication of the topic to be discussed and any material they may display. Then the information so gathered should be properly analysed to assess whether the topic and the material is appropriate, taking into account not only freedom of expression and academic intellectual freedom, but also providing a safe, respectful and inclusive university environment.
21. **Recommendation Three** - The Council of the University should, in relation to the implementation of the policies relating to the expression of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom, emphasise:
 - (a) the proper restrictions that are placed on the expression of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom; and
 - (b) the importance of being civil, respectful and inclusive and the protection of the wellbeing of all staff, students and visitors to the University.
22. **Recommendation Four** - The Council of the University should adopt a standard for itself, and for the purposes of providing guidance to all academics, staff and visitors to the University, on the balancing of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom with the appropriate and lawful restrictions to prevent inappropriate speech or actions. Consideration should be given to the guidance outlined by the Rabat Plan developed by the United Nations in assessing that balance to take into account:

" .. . the social and political context of the speech; the status of the speaker; intent (as opposed to recklessness or negligence) as to whether the speech incites the audience against a target group; the content and form of the speech (including the degree to which the speech was provocative or direct, and having regard to whether the speech was public, the size of the audience and means of its dissemination); and the likelihood of harm, including imminence."
23. **Recommendation Five** - The management of the University should conduct regular training programs for all staff and academics to familiarise the staff and academics with

the policies of the University and the importance of their implementation, with particular focus on the current risk of racist and antisemitic behaviour.

24. **Recommendation Six** - The Council of the University should adopt and publish a definition of antisemitism for the purposes of informing the students, staff, academics and visitors to the University and so as to inform University administrators to enable them to properly prevent and sanction inappropriate behaviour.
25. Mr Middleton delivered his report on 16 June 2025, and the University Council has now resolved to accept Mr Middleton's findings and recommendations.



Review Report
Queensland University of Technology
The Honourable John E Middleton AM KC

16 June 2025

Private & Confidential

This report contains language that some may find offensive.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Other introductory observations	4
3. Questions to be addressed by the Review.....	8
4. Methodology and Process	10
5. The Carumba Institute	11
6. Events that happened prior to the Debate and Symposium.....	13
7. The Debate	19
8. The Symposium	28
9. Media coverage	33
10. Correspondence after the Debate and Symposium.....	35
11. Policies	37
12. Discussion	49
13. Future course.....	62
14. Recommendations	63

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2025, the Carumba Institute of the Queensland University of Technology (**University**) hosted two events: the "Greatest Race Debate" (**Debate**) and the "National Symposium on Unifying Anti-Racist Research and Action" (**Symposium**). The Carumba Institute is an Indigenous research and education institute within the University.
- 1.2 The Debate was held on 22 January 2025. Presenters were invited to use humour as a mechanism to share their best "worst" takes on race debates within Australia. The two-day Symposium program on 23-24 January 2025 comprised anti-racist researchers, practitioners and community members with direct experience of racism. The stated aim of the Symposium was to bring together researchers, community members and policymakers to discuss and promote anti-racist initiatives.
- 1.3 Following the Debate and the Symposium, the University received extensive correspondence regarding these events. The correspondence included complaints of hurt and offence, including allegations of antisemitism, and, conversely, expressions of support for the events.
- 1.4 On 24 January 2025, Professor Margaret Sheil AO, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University, undertook to review the Debate and Symposium and take any appropriate action. For these reasons, the University on 4 February 2025 commissioned this independent review of the circumstances relating to the Debate and Symposium (**Review**).
- 1.5 The objectives of the Review are to:
 - (a) Establish the relevant facts, including the sequence of events surrounding the Debate and Symposium.
 - (b) By reference to the established facts, assess the establishment, organisation, conduct and content of the Debate and Symposium in relation to compliance with the relevant University's policies.
 - (c) By reference to the established facts, evaluating the complaints received by the University in relation to the Debate and Symposium.
 - (d) Identify any areas of non-alignment with relevant University policies and procedures, and advise the University in relation to measures it should consider to ensure such non-alignment does not occur in the future.
 - (e) Review current University policies and practices related to organising academic events to provide recommendations, if any, in relation to the organisation and hosting of future events, including having regard to the work of the Hon Robert French AC in his 2019 Review of Freedom of Speech in Australian Higher Education Providers (**French Report**).
 - (f) Identify and record any findings and observations potentially relevant to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights into antisemitism at Australian universities (**Antisemitism Inquiry**).

- 1.6 It is important to appreciate that the Review focuses on the events concerning and surrounding the Debate and the Symposium.
- 1.7 The purpose of the Review is not to deal with the many different forms of protest or anti-racist behaviour that has occurred at universities in Australia and overseas, nor to deal generally with the internal complaints procedure (including internal complaint response or disciplinary mechanisms) currently operating at the University.
- 1.8 A great deal of important work has already been undertaken and is continuing on broader issues of racism and in particular, antisemitic behaviour. Most of this work is in the public domain and will further inform the University in its consideration of the appropriate future action to take in addition to the specific recommendations made in the Review.
- 1.9 There are certain observations of a general nature that can be made that should be largely uncontentious and which inform the Review:
- (a) Leading up to the Debate and Symposium various universities throughout Australia and overseas experienced a significant amount of protest and civil unrest relating to or arising from the events of 7 October 2023 and the hostilities in the Middle East. This has been well documented and recorded, so needs no elaboration in the Review.
 - (b) Since 7 October 2023, there has been a marked increase in antisemitic behaviour. This has not only involved hateful speech and unlawful behaviour across the Australian community but has occurred worldwide. The activism and protests that have arisen out of the conflict in the Middle East have undoubtedly caused great distress for many members of the university community and have led to escalated campus activism with all sorts of inappropriate behaviour.
 - (c) The protests that have occurred have involved a number of incidents. Many protests have involved antisemitic behaviour and disruption to the normal function of a university, but some have involved Islamophobic conduct. There have been instances of encampments which gave rise to inappropriate behaviour, threatening or racist speech. There have been instances of protests where students have felt unsafe on campus – where there have been activities such as flying of flags, the display of posters contrary to university policies and the display of banners which involve antisemitic or racist themes. Protest activity is often carried on within a building. The potential for persons to be harassed or bullied in those circumstances is greater than when a protest is held outside a building. Protests also have included disruption to lectures. There have been instances where posters have been placed around universities which contain material that some find to be intimidating or threatening.
 - (d) Universities have as one of their objectives (whether enshrined in legislation or not) the promotion of scholarship, research, free enquiry, advancement through teaching and academic excellence. A diversity of views amongst a university's community is to be expected and celebrated. Candid and constructive conversations are to be encouraged.
 - (e) Freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom are part of the fabric of universities, and must be upheld to facilitate the objectives of a university. However, there are legitimate limits on freedom of speech and academic

intellectual freedom. These limits are imposed by appropriate university policies, and by the common law and by legislation.

- (f) There is a difference between freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom. Each term must be interpreted in context, particularly the concept of academic intellectual freedom and the ability to engage in free intellectual inquiry. Freedom of speech or expression would normally have a wider connotation than academic intellectual freedom divorced from the relationship of academic staff and a university.
- (g) There is a great tradition in universities for theatre and performance, debates, student newspapers (or the modern equivalent) and students and academics being given the opportunity to try out ideas and develop various skills. This is to be encouraged and fostered.
- (h) Comedy, cartoons, political portraiture, art works and satire have been and are often used as a way of expressing opinions on social, political or religious issues. They can be a very effective method of demonstrating a point of view. However, particularly with satire, it can be misunderstood or taken out of context, particularly through social media. Nevertheless, the use of humorous cartoon depictions or satire is not immune from the application of the restrictions that otherwise apply to freedom of speech or expression and academic intellectual freedom.
- (i) Staff, and particularly students at universities, have for centuries been involved in protest, covering various social and political issues. However, whilst in itself protest is not to be discouraged in a democratic system, the form of protest must be regulated according to current standards of behaviour and community expectations, even beyond that specifically regulated by legislation.
- (j) In no circumstances should hate speech or vilification be tolerated, nor allowed to be dressed up under the cover of political or religious language to avoid its condemnation. The basic problem with expression of hate speech or vilification is twofold: even if not urging violence, it can be a spark that escalates into violence; and if repeated sufficiently, can become normalised and create an environment where hatred and violence can flourish so as to become generally accepted by some members of the broader community.
- (k) In any given situation, to determine the balance between the appropriate exercise of the right to freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom, and conduct that is otherwise appropriately to be limited, is no easy task for administrators of universities. Nevertheless, it is a task that must be undertaken by administrators of universities so as to enforce their own policies and values. These policies are made to promote the objectives of the university, to ensure a safe learning and working environment and to promote the basis of a healthy dialogue within the university amongst people who hold a diversity of views.
- (l) Adopting policies or standards, whilst important, is only the first step. Applying these policies and standards is not without its difficulties; but discipline and institutional intervention is required because most students, staff and visitors to a university want to feel safe in an environment that has rules that are appropriately enforced in a timely and effective fashion.

- (m) Undoubtedly with discourse on certain issues, passions can be stirred. It is important to take action against any form of hate directed to any person or groups of people. Lately, attention has been focused on antisemitic hate, which has involved demonising, vilification, harassment, online attacks, doxxing and boycotting. However, any form of hate directed to any person or group of people should never be tolerated.
- (n) Universities have a legitimate interest in protecting their reputation. All universities necessarily rely on their alumni, government, philanthropy and the goodwill of the community for funding and other aspects of support. If a university's reputation is tarnished, this will necessarily adversely affect the ability to fulfil all of the functions of a university and the ability of a university to operate.

2. Other introductory observations

- 2.1 A very useful report was made public by the University of Sydney: "University of Sydney External Review Report" by Bruce Hodgkinson AM SC, published in November 2024 as commissioned by the Senate of the University of Sydney (**University of Sydney Review Report**).
- 2.2 One particular aspect of the University of Sydney Review Report is of significance. Mr Hodgkinson refers to the quote:

***"One should aim not at being possible to understand,
but at being impossible to misunderstand"***

Quintillian, 95AD

Mr Hodgkinson then went on to explain that:

"It is not the words or phrases that are clearly antisemitic which cause the problem. It is words and phrases which can be used as a legitimate expression of view or in a way which is antisemitic. Often it will be claimed by the person using the word or phrase that they have done so in a legitimate context whilst those who have heard what was said are certain that an antisemitic word or phrase has been used.

Any person using a word or phrase that could possibly be interpreted in such a way that it is unlawful or otherwise impermissible should be made responsible for identifying to the audience at the time the word or phrase is used, the context in which it is used. Requiring a speaker to identify the context as suggested here reflects the approach taken by the Full Federal Court in [University of Sydney v National Tertiary Education Industry Union (2024) 304 FCR 18]. By identifying context which establishes the legitimacy of their use the words and phrases could not be understood to have an impermissible meaning. They will not be construed as sexist, bullying, harassment or racist. The speaker will have ensured clarity."

2.3 The requirement that any presenter identify clearly the context in which an expression is used or is to be understood is a means to ensure that persons are respectful to others and engage each other with civility.

2.4 It is to be noted that in the context of an enterprise agreement regulating academic staff at a university, its interpretation and application to a particular limited dispute and the topic of academic intellectual freedom, the High Court of Australia in the case of *Ridd v James Cook University* [2021] HCA 32 made the following comment at paragraph 33:

"Whilst different views might reasonably be taken about some additional restrictions upon intellectual freedom, the instrumental and ethical foundations for the developed concept of intellectual freedom are powerful reasons why it has rarely been restricted by any asserted 'right' of others to respect or courtesy. It is not necessary to go as far as Said's assertion that 'the whole point [of an intellectual] is to be embarrassing, contrary, even unpleasant' to conclude that, however desirable courtesy and respect might be, the purpose of intellectual freedom must permit of expression that departs from those civil norms. As Dworkin wrote in an essay invoking Rabelais, Voltaire, Rushdie, Galileo, Darwin, Wilde, and Mencken:

'The idea that people have that right [to protection from speech that might reasonably be thought to embarrass or lower others' esteem for them or their own self respect] is absurd. Of course it would be good if everyone liked and respected everyone else who merited that response. But we cannot recognize a right to respect, or a right to be free from the effects of speech that makes respect less likely, without wholly subverting the central ideals of the culture of independence and denying the ethical individualism that that culture protects'."

2.5 This comment does not, in context of the Review, detract from the justifiable expectation of the University for civility and the need to respect the rights of other people. In the discourse of racial vilification or hate speech, any such conduct goes well beyond that of being merely embarrassing, contrary or unpleasant.

2.6 At the University, there is already an expectation that students and staff members engage in discourse of all kinds with civility. Engaging with civility underpins the way in which the University expects its academic staff and students to speak and behave in all situations. This is an aspect of behavior which the University should continue to promote but with greater emphasis.

2.7 Any restrictions to refuse permission to individuals or groups to hire or use the University's facilities may lead to controversy about restrictions on freedom of speech. However, the University not only has the right but also the responsibility to control the use of University land and use of the University's facilities. The University is a public authority created by statute for the benefit of the community. Whilst to refuse a visitor to speak solely on the basis of their identity or proposed content of a speech may, on any particular occasion, not be appropriate. However, the University's ultimate duty is to foster the wellbeing of students and staff, amongst a number of other legal duties. In addition, the University has a legitimate interest as a public institution to ensure that activities or events it holds are not conducted in a way that is detrimental to the University's character as a place of high learning and scholarship, or detrimental to its reputation.

- 2.8 In considering the French Report (as the Review was requested to do) an initial observation can be made. The French Report of March 2019 was prepared and published in a climate when there was concern over the erosion of the freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom. The starting point was to make sure there was an effective restraint of the exercise of over broad powers to the extent they would be applied adversely to freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom without proper justification. There is no doubt that freedom of expression as a human right remains of paramount consideration in respect of the protection and promotion of all human rights. It is to be recalled that the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) has as its preamble that in enacting that legislation the Parliament of Queensland recognised that human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society that respects the rule of law. However, an important overriding qualification is that human rights must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights and dignity of others.
- 2.9 Antisemitic rhetoric, when it involves conduct that amounts to bullying, harassment or intimidation stands in its own category. If the rhetoric is seen as bullying, harassment or intimidation then the overall context does not matter. The characterisation of bullying, harassment or intimidation once made would lead to that conduct being treated as unacceptable.
- 2.10 It is obviously important that there be a de-escalation of conflict in the interest of the safety and security of students and staff on campus. Of particular concern at this time are the Jewish staff and students and there needs to be a showing of empathy and understanding in relation to this group of people.
- 2.11 It may be that interim measures need to be taken; one measure being taken is to provide a place specifically designated for Jewish students. However, on 20 February 2025 in a speech at the Sky News Antisemitism Summit, the Hon Justice Michael Lee said in relation to safe rooms being made available to Jewish students:
- "I recognise the safe room was apparently requested by the NSW branch of the Australasian Union of Jewish Students. But the key point is that its establishment amounts to a stark admission of failure: the entire university should and must be made safe for Jewish students. Rather than isolating Jewish students, should not those within the university be asking themselves the profound question as to how and why have things come to this, and committing themselves to reform?"*
- 2.12 The University's obligation is to safeguard the safety and security of **all** members of the university community including, in current times, their Jewish staff and students.
- 2.13 Then, there is a distinction between a person feeling uncomfortable and being made unsafe in the course of a particular conversation or environment. Some attending the Debate and Symposium wore the keffiyeh – a symbol worn for showing solidarity with the Palestinian suffering from Israel colonialism. For some, this may be a form of dress which is undesirable and provocative. It may contribute to a Jewish person feeling uncomfortable and depending on the circumstances, unsafe. However, not all students (including Jewish students) engaging in discourse will necessarily equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism if in the context of that conversation the distinction is made clear between the dislike for the actions of Israel as a nation (or its leaders) and the dislike or hatred of Jews.

2.14 The difficult issue will always be the balancing of the paramount importance of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom and the need to avoid conduct that is apt to intimidate or lead to hate speech. The prohibition on extreme conduct, such as hate speech, protects the whole environment in which debate and civil discourse is allowed to take place.

2.15 In the discussion of freedom of speech in the French Report, it is acknowledged that freedom of speech is not without limitations. The law prohibits various forms of conduct and does not permit the use of hate speech or vilification. The French Report provides examples:

- (a) There is no right to go onto private land in order to express a particular view.
- (b) It does not allow a protest over a speech of others by preventing them from speaking.
- (c) It does not permit negative speech directed towards particular classes of persons defined by their attributes, ancestry or religious beliefs.

These are but a few. The boundaries of this freedom are either not understood or simply not obeyed.

2.16 In the Antisemitism Inquiry's report published in February 2025, in the additional comments of Ms Kylea Tink MP it was stated (consistently with the majority of the members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights), in relation to balancing human rights, the following:

"1.31 A number of submitters highlighted the direct relevance of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. This plan, developed by the United Nations, sets out conclusions and recommendations which are intended to 'guide all stakeholders in implementing the international prohibition of any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

1.33 [The Rabat Plan of Action] outlines a six-part threshold test for assessing the severity of the hatred taking into account: the social and political context of the speech; the status of the speaker; intent (as opposed to recklessness or negligence) as to whether the speech incites the audience against a target group; the content and form of the speech (including the degree to which the speech was provocative or direct, and having regard to whether the speech was public, the size of the audience and means of its dissemination); and the likelihood of harm, including imminence.

1.37 As noted in the committee's report, human rights often conflict, in which case there is a need to balance human rights against each other. In the context of universities responding to antisemitic speech and conduct, the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law stated that:

'Laws, policies, and practices addressing vilification do not breach freedoms of the individual and group who are vilifying another person or group. Laws, policies, and practices which appropriately define vilification, and which do not impose carte blanche restrictions on such activity are likely to be human rights-compliant, given the significant social ill sought to be addressed by these laws. Responses seeking to address vilification and hate speech must be adequately balanced so as not to inadvertently or arbitrarily infringe

the human rights of others. Broad or vague restrictions, for instance, are particularly at risk of violating human rights in a way which is neither proportionate nor legitimate. The issue of vilification and hate speech cannot be used to suppress expression and conduct which is not violent and does not incite others.'

1.38 Mr Hugh de Kretser, President of the [Australian Human Rights Commission], stated:

'Issues around the intersection between freedom from discrimination and vilification and freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are at the heart of this inquiry into antisemitism at universities. Human rights principles provide practical guidance on how to balance human rights when they intersect and how to maximise intersecting rights to the greatest extent possible. They require that any limitation on a human right must be for a legitimate purpose and must be no wider than is necessary to achieve that purpose. Applying these principles will help universities to address antisemitism and promote the human rights of all students and staff.'

1.39 He stated further:

'This issue is the hardest part of this inquiry. The issue that is playing out in universities is playing out to a different degree and with different dimensions in workplaces across the country...[H]uman rights principles can help. There is a plethora of opinion through courts and international bodies about how to draw that line between freedom from discrimination, safety for students and staff in the present context, and freedom of expression. In a sense, it is easy to say that freedom of expression can be lawfully restricted to prevent hate speech and incitement to violence. There are very clear examples of where things are controversial and unpopular but permissible and where things are clearly racist hate speech and incitement to violence, which should be prohibited. Then there are areas in the middle where it becomes much harder. When you look at the material that I am looking at that is before this committee, you see those examples coming up time and time again. A human rights approach would say: 'If you're trying to restrict speech, what is the purpose for it? Is it a legitimate purpose? Is the thing you are doing to restrict it connected rationally to that purpose? And is there a less restrictive means of achieving that purpose?' That simple test in human rights speak, or the proportionality test, is, I have found through my career when looking at difficult policy positions or issues, to be a powerful way of stepping through to check the reasonableness of action, in this case by a university administration or by a government or another policy maker.'"

2.17 This guidance is a useful basis to undertake the balancing of promoting freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom and inappropriate behaviour.

2.18 Recommendation 4 deals with this issue.

3. Questions to be addressed by the Review

3.1 The questions to be addressed by the Review are as follows:

Compliance with the Code of Conduct – Staff (Code of Conduct)

- (a) Did the University's organisation of the Debate and Symposium align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Code of Conduct?
- (b) Did the content of presentation material and conduct of presenters at the Debate and Symposium align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Code of Conduct?
- (c) Did any University staff involved with the organisation of the Debate and Symposium breach the Code of Conduct?
- (d) Does the University need to review its Code of Conduct in relation to the organisation of events and, if yes, are there any recommended changes to the Code of Conduct?

Compliance with Academic Freedom Policy

- (a) Did the University's selection of presenters for the Debate and Symposium align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Academic Freedom Policy?
- (b) Was the content of the Debate and Symposium in accord with the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech as detailed in the Academic Freedom Policy?
- (c) Does the University need to review its Academic Freedom Policy in relation to the organisation of events and, if yes, are there any recommended changes to the Academic Freedom Policy?

Compliance with other University policies

- (a) Did the University's organisation of the Debate and Symposium comply with the following University policies:
 - (i) MOPP – Social Media Policy;
 - (ii) MOPP - Information Privacy Policy;
 - (iii) MOPP - Booking of University Space Policy; and
 - (iv) MOPP - VIP Visits Policy.
- (b) Did the University's organisation of, the University's selection of presenters for and content of the Debate and Symposium comply with the MOPP – Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism Policy?
- (c) Does the University need to review any of the above policies and if yes, are there any recommended changes to these policies?

Evaluation of complaints and correspondence

- (a) Were the complaints received by the University in relation to the presentations at the Debate and Symposium reasonable, in the context of

your factual findings and the material presented at the Debate and Symposium?

- (b) Does the University need to review any relevant policies, not already identified in response to the above questions, in light of these complaints and, if yes, are there any recommended changes to those policies?

4. Methodology and Process

Methodology

4.1 The Review has been conducted through:

- (a) a review of relevant University Policies, and related documents;
- (b) a review of documentation provided by the University in relation to the Debate and Symposium (including complaints, correspondence of support and submissions of various parties);
- (c) a review of any recordings of the Debate and Symposium sessions in the possession of the University or as independently sourced in the course of the Review;
- (d) interviews with University staff involved in the organisation of the Debate and Symposium and the approval of presentation materials for the Debate and Symposium;
- (e) to the extent possible, interviews with individuals other than University staff who attended the Debate and Symposium and who were prepared to contribute to the Review; and
- (f) independent research and inquiry including receipt of confidential information.

4.2 The Review did not specifically invite members of the public to make any submissions, but has considered submissions voluntarily provided to the University and provided to the Review.

4.3 It has not been necessary for the Review to specifically consider the complete legislative environment in which the University operates. The University must comply with many Acts of the Commonwealth and Queensland Parliaments, many of which are referred to in the French Report and more recently in the University of Sydney Review Report.

4.4 University policies cannot be inconsistent with relevant legislation, but the University may supplement that legislation with its own policies and procedures. Such policies and procedures must come within the powers given to the University under the *Queensland University of Technology Act 1998* (Qld). These powers are wide, and the University has the power to do anything necessary or convenient to be done for, or in connection with, its functions as set out in that legislation.

4.5 Accompanying the Review is a Confidential Review Report which deals with certain individual staff members of the University and specific findings that may involve potential breaches of the Code of Conduct and other policies of the University. Necessarily, the

Review does not therefore in relation to any individual staff member make reference to breaches of the Code of Conduct or other policies of the University.

5. The Carumba Institute

Purpose

- 5.1 The Carumba Institute is a leading Indigenous research and educational institute which aims to provide a research and educational environment which "*foregrounds Indigenous sovereignty*".
- 5.2 The Carumba Institute recognises:
- (a) the centrality of land to Indigenous Australian culture, identity, and spirituality;
 - (b) the significance of intellectual work that affirms Indigenous Australian rights to country; and
 - (c) the criticality of Indigenous Australian knowledges to a sustainable future.
- 5.3 Guiding principles of the Carumba Institute include:
- (a) **Pride in Black Knowing:** The Carumba Institute considers that Indigenous knowledges are living, embodied, excellent to real world change.
 - (b) **Power in Black Knowing:** The Carumba Institute recognises that Indigenous peoples and communities have long been powerful in their knowing – a knowing that is found in the hearts and homes of Indigenous people.
 - (c) **Justice in Black Knowing:** The Carumba Institute prioritises knowledge production which is courageous in its pursuit of justice, grounded in truth telling, and of service to Indigenous and Black resistance struggles locally and globally.
 - (d) **Joy in Black Knowing:** The Carumba Institute embraces the full range of emotions found in the expression of Black Knowing, including the centrality of joy to Indigenous life worlds.
 - (e) **Belonging in Black Knowing:** The Carumba Institute extends the gift of belonging to community, Indigenously and intellectually.
 - (f) **Possibility in Black Knowing:** The Carumba Institute believes Indigenous knowledges provide unlimited opportunities for solving real world problems.

Leadership

- 5.4 In January 2023, Professor Watego was appointed Executive Director of the Carumba Institute. As Executive Director, Professor Watego was responsible for contributing to the University's strategic vision while leading a team of 16 academic and professional staff, in addition to those engaged across research projects.
- 5.5 Professor Watego is a Munanjahli and South Sea Islander woman and a recognised expert on the roles of race and racism in structuring Indigenous life, particularly in relation to health inequalities. Professor Watego holds a PhD and has authored over 40 academic publications, and 50 essays and editorials, and contributed to

publications in The Conversation, IndigenousX, the Guardian, and Meanjin.

- 5.6 Following her appointment in 2023, Professor Watego engaged an external consultant who assisted in the development of a vision and strategy for the Carumba Institute. This vision and strategy aligned with the University's Indigenous Australian Research Strategy and Connections - the QUT Strategy 2023 to 2027.
- 5.7 This vision was endorsed by the Carumba Institute Advisory Committee (**CIAC**). The CIAC is a management committee accountable to the Vice-Chancellor and President. The CIAC meets bi-annually to review the work of the Carumba Institute and provides only strategic guidance. This guidance focuses on:
- (a) monitoring the activities and strategic development of the Carumba Institute;
 - (b) providing strategic advice on fund raising and philanthropy opportunities; and
 - (c) acting as an advocate for the Carumba Institute outside the University.
- 5.8 The CIAC was not involved in monitoring the Debate or Symposium.
- 5.9 Professor Watego has been involved in what some would describe as anti-Zionist activity, and has published material online, especially in the journal Overland which is supportive of Palestine. Some equate or at least see an overlap of anti-Zionism with antisemitism and view anti-Zionism as a contemporary form of antisemitism, and the denial of a right to self-determination for Jews. This was the view of Australian Academic Alliance Against Antisemitism (**5A**). This is an area of disputation within the Jewish community itself, at times quite passionate and intense disputation, and the subject of media debate.
- 5.10 The views held by Professor Watego were well ventilated in the public domain. There has been no attempt to conceal these views and any "bias" would have been well known by the public. In considering in the Review the establishment, organisation, conduct and content of the Debate and Symposium, there is no evidence that Professor Watego's views influenced the choice of or presentation by the various speakers. Whilst some individuals have been critical of the choice of speakers (not just based on antisemitic concerns), speakers and other participants were not invited or excluded on the basis of their beliefs or previously expressed public opinions. This is consistent with implementing the encouragement of debate and freedom of expression in a university environment.

Submissions regarding the future of the Carumba Institute

- 5.11 The Review has received submissions which include that the Carumba Institute should be closed and no longer continue. There have been a number of reasons for this call for the Institute to be closed. This includes a perception that there is no connection between the originally established work of the Institute and the work it is now undertaking.
- 5.12 The Review is not in a position to assess this issue. However, the Review is in a position to conclude that the University Council should consider the future role and function of the Carumba Institute. The scope of the Debate and of the Symposium did go beyond the original vision and strategy for the Carumba Institute. Whatever else may be said, the media coverage and various responses to the Debate in particular whether justified or not, have damaged the reputation of the University.

- 5.13 It is for the Council, having regard to its overall responsibility as to allocation of resources and the management of the University as a whole, to determine the future role and function of the Carumba Institute, and the future leadership of and management supervision over the Carumba Institute if it is to continue in existence in the future.
- 5.14 Importantly, the way in which the Debate and Symposium were organised and carried out demonstrate that there should be more supervision over the public activities carried out by the Carumba Institute and by the University itself. There are structural issues the Council of the University will need to consider, including the benefit of having an academic supervisor over the Carumba Institute within the University itself and more than one person to oversee, from the point of view of the University as a whole, the activities of the Carumba Institute and the holding of public events.
- 5.15 Recommendations 1 and 2 deal with this issue.

6. Events that happened prior to the Debate and Symposium

Establishment and organisation of the Debate and Symposium

Origins of the events

- 6.1 In 2024, Professor Chelsea Watego, Executive Director of the Carumba Institute, initiated plans to host a Symposium in January 2025.
- 6.2 The Symposium was organised as part of a Carumba Institute-led Australian Research Council (**ARC**) Centre of Excellence bid: "Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Racism" (**CEER**). The proposed CEER would be led and administered by CEER Director Professor Watego. The CEER would receive administrative support, including a Chief Operating Officer and other key administrative staff, from the Carumba Institute.
- 6.3 On 28 June 2024, Professor Watego advised Ms Leitch (the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Australians)) and Professor Sheil that she and the Carumba Institute had been asked to lead the CEER bid. Professor Watego outlined that this would include a symposium or panel around Australia Day in 2025.
- 6.4 On 12 September 2024, a planning meeting was held by members of the Carumba Institute regarding an 'Anti-Racism Conference Meeting'. Attendees included a Carumba Institute Coordinator (**Coordinator A**), two University academics, an academic from Griffith University and an academic from University of Melbourne. At this time, a draft schedule for both the Debate and the two-day Symposium was

proposed. On 18 September 2024, a further Anti-Racism Conference Meeting was held.

Rationale for selection of speakers

- 6.5 Professor Watego was responsible for the selection of the panellists at the Debate, in consultation with members of the Carumba Institute's academic staff. These panellists were selected on the basis of:
- (a) having had lived experience of being negatively racialised;
 - (b) having had experience of public speaking (for example, in the media, academia or arts) relating to race and racism; and
 - (c) having personally experienced their accounts of racism being dismissed.
- 6.6 At the direction of Professor Watego, throughout September 2024, staff of the Carumba Institute commenced seeking speakers for the Symposium event.
- 6.7 On 19 September 2024, an academic from the Carumba Institute extended an email invitation to all Centre of Excellence members. Recipients were advised to notify Coordinator A, if they were interested in attending and presenting their work at the Symposium. It was intended that the majority of speakers would be drawn from the following parties identified in the CEER application:
- (a) Key Personnel;
 - (b) Chief Investigators; and
 - (c) Partner Organisations.
- 6.8 In the selection of panellists for the Symposium, care was taken to have a broad selection of participants. The Symposium (and for that matter the Debate) could not be characterised as being pro-Palestinian. Nor was the debate and Symposium intended to be a platform for antisemitism or to be violent or incite violence against any group of people including those who were Jewish or held a Zionist position.
- 6.9 An important focus of the Symposium was to draw on Indigenous Australian issues and nearly half of the speakers at the Symposium were identified as Indigenous Australians. In fact, Palestinian and Jewish speakers were few.

Organisation and promotion

- 6.10 On 30 September 2024, the first discussion regarding the hosting of the Symposium was held between Ms Angela Leitch and Professor Watego. Ms Leitch was not a member of the academic staff, and had largely left the organisation of the Symposium to the leadership of Professor Watego. At this time, Professor Sheil had not been made aware of the Debate, nor had her approval been sought.
- 6.11 A number of Carumba Institute staff were involved in facilitating preparations for the Debate and the Symposium. Coordinator A, who reports directly to the Carumba Institute's Manager, held a key organisational role.
- 6.12 The Carumba Institute determined that both events would be open to the public. Specifically, they would welcome academics, practitioners, students, and the public

who were committed to anti-racism work to engage in critical discussion about the challenges and possibilities in this work.

- 6.13 From 19 November 2024, a save-the-date for the Symposium was advertised on the Carumba Institute's Instagram page.
- 6.14 Professor Watego scheduled a 'National Conference update meeting' within the team on 28 November 2024.
- 6.15 On 18 December 2024, Professor Watego distributed an email on behalf of the Carumba Institute. That email announced speakers for the Symposium and advertised tickets for both the Debate and the Symposium. That same day, the Debate was also advertised on the Carumba Institute's Instagram page.
- 6.16 At this time, the speakers in the Debate were identified as Ms Ruby Wharton, Mr Nasser Mashni, Dr Singh and Ms Huda Fadlelmawla (known as Huda the Goddess).
- 6.17 The Debate was promoted as an event where speakers would be invited to share their best "worst" takes on race debates in Australia. Promotional material described the aim as "to approach this topic courageously, intellectually, and humorously, in order to change the way we discuss and think about race and racism".
- 6.18 The Symposium was promoted as an opportunity to bring together anti-racist researchers and practitioners to collaboratively address racism. The Symposium was intended to focus on promoting excellence in anti-racist efforts locally and globally.
- 6.19 Both the Debate and the Symposium were ticketed events. Access would not be permitted without valid registration. Tickets were available for purchase online via the Eventbrite website for the Debate and the Symposium.
- 6.20 Internal documents of the Carumba Institute indicated there were 400 tickets available for the Debate, and 300 for the Symposium. Tickets sold out online ahead of the event.

Directions to proposed speakers

- 6.21 Around 19 December 2024, Coordinator A was in the process of preparing draft Panel Briefing notes. These briefing notes would be distributed to each of the 8 panels at the Symposium. The panellists would also be encouraged to catch up with each other ahead of the Symposium.
- 6.22 In January 2025, the Symposium Working Group within the Carumba Institute comprised a number of staff, including Coordinator A, three University academics and a Manager from within the University (**Manager A**), supported by other staff members including another coordinator from within the Carumba Institute (**Coordinator B**). Coordinator A was responsible for emailing speakers with their briefs.

- 6.23 During January 2025, Professor Watego held a briefing meeting with some of the proposed speakers at the Debate. Ms Sarah Schwartz was unable to attend. Later, on 15 January 2025, Ms Schwartz liaised with Professor Watego in a call regarding her planned approach to the Debate. In that call, Professor Watego provided Ms Schwartz with a general overview regarding the approaches of other speakers to the Debate. Ms Schwartz outlined that she was interested in speaking about the weaponisation of the Jewish identity and antisemitism by far-right political leaders. Ms Schwartz indicated she would refer to figures such as President Donald Trump, Mr Elon Musk and then Opposition Leader and Leader of the Liberal Party Mr Peter Dutton.
- 6.24 On 16 January 2025, Coordinator A emailed Ms Schwartz regarding whether she intended to present while displaying pictures on screen. Coordinator A requested this information solely for the purposes of determining the "stage requirements". On 17 January 2025, Ms Schwartz advised that she would *"...use a couple of pictures, which I can put into PowerPoint slides"*.
- 6.25 On 20 January 2025, Ms Schwartz provided Coordinator A with a copy of her PowerPoint slides, speaker biography and video clip depicting former Prime Minister Scott Morrison playing the ukulele. On 21 January 2025, Coordinator A forwarded these slides to Coordinator B.
- 6.26 On 21 January 2025, Coordinator A sent an email to all proposed speakers at the Debate requesting copies of their pictures or slides, and biographies, if they had not already been provided. That same day, Ms Munro sent an email to Professor Watego, copying Coordinator A, enclosing images to support her proposed presentation.
- 6.27 Also on 21 January 2025, Dr Singh (another participant in the Debate) also provided a copy of his slides and speaker biography to Coordinator A. Coordinator A subsequently sent an email to Coordinator B and Professor Watego, referring Professor Watego to Dr Singh's biography, and Coordinator B to the attached slides.
- 6.28 On 21 January 2025, Coordinator B sent an email to members of the University's Venues and Events team enclosing the event run-sheet and copies of the content to be presented by other speakers at the Debate. Mr Kevin Yow Yeh, Ms Munro, Ms Schwartz and Dr Singh each were to present alongside slides. Ms Wharton, Mr Mashni and Huda the Goddess intended to speak before a holding slide only.
- 6.29 Two matters are to be observed. First, members of the Carumba Institute did not properly review the material to be presented at the Debate. Professor Watego considered that it was inappropriate to do so, having regard to the context and respect for academic intellectual freedom and freedom of speech. Secondly, the collection of material that was provided by the speakers at the Debate was received only a few days before the Debate itself. In the circumstances, the material was not and could not be adequately considered as to its potential impact, and whether the content of such material came within any of the qualifications placed upon freedom of expression and academic intellectual freedom.

Events immediately preceding the Debate and Symposium

- 6.30 In the week of 13 January 2025, the University received correspondence from

several individuals and organisations expressing concerns about the Symposium. These concerns focused on possible hate speech and antisemitism at the event. On 17 January 2025, the 5A sent correspondence to Professor Sheil expressing their concern that the Symposium's line-up of speakers and topics indicated a likelihood of engagement in antisemitic hate speech.

- 6.31 On 20 January 2025, Ms Leitch held a discussion with Professor Watego and enquired whether Professor Watego anticipated any issues arising from hosting the Debate. Specifically, Ms Leitch asked Professor Watego about any concerns regarding racism against particular groups. Professor Watego confirmed this would not be an issue, particularly because the speakers were instructed to discuss their own lived experiences.
- 6.32 On 21 January 2025, Ms Leitch responded to the correspondence from 5A as follows (omitting formal parts):

"Dear Mr Knoll AM and Mr Eilam,

Thank you for your email and letter regarding QUT's National Symposium on Unifying Anti-Racist Research and Action. The Vice-Chancellor has asked me to respond on her behalf.

QUT is committed to cultural diversity and anti-racism for all students and staff, and we promote and encourage awareness, understanding and appreciation of the differences that exist amongst cultural groups. We recognise the responsibility of QUT to redress disadvantage and to overcome exclusion, bigotry, ethnocentrism, prejudice and racism within our educational institution and we respect and protect the rights of our students and staff to a discrimination-free environment.

The focus of the conference is on unifying anti-racist research and action and bringing together a diverse range of anti-racism struggles. A call for speakers for the symposium occurred in September 2024. As a result, a two-day program was developed involving over 40 speakers from across the country as well as respected international scholars and practitioners, which includes Palestinian and Jewish speakers.

QUT has a well-developed policy framework that supports academic freedom and is committed to the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech as essential and integral features of academic and civic life. This position applies to activities undertaken by QUT academic staff, and activities held on QUT campuses and at off-site venues. This aligns with the Model Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in Australian Higher Education Providers as well as other QUT's statutory obligations.

Consistent with the Human Rights Act 2019 and with Australian law, QUT has taken all reasonable steps to provide and support a culturally safe and supportive symposium for all participants, that is free from discrimination.

Any complaints that may arise on cultural, ethnic or racial grounds will be resolved by the university using established process."

- 6.33 On 21 January 2025, the University also received several further expressions of concern, including from the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies Inc., regarding

the Symposium and the selection of the proposed speakers. The University was warned by Jewish leaders that the speakers could inflame antisemitism, as it was stated that some of the speakers scheduled for the Symposium had demonstrated a history of engaging in anti-Jewish racism. The University was asked to show leadership and ensure that there was to be no hate speech at the events and no antisemitic rhetoric dressed up as anti-Israel criticism. These concerns were directed to the Vice-Chancellor's office and University Registrar for consideration.

- 6.34 However, the Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Sheil, was on leave until 20 January 2025 (two days before the Debate). This fact and her subsequent commitments during the period of the Debate and Symposium meant that she was not fully briefed or aware of the full extent of the concerns raised in correspondence. Professor Sheil was contacted personally by a number of people about the media coverage that followed the Debate although, as already mentioned, Professor Sheil was only informed about the Debate and its content after it had occurred.
- 6.35 One of the practical problems that arises, even where a university is aware of an upcoming public event which may involve the discussion of sensitive issues, is to determine the appropriate course of action. A university must take all practical measures to ensure the safety and security of students and staff, and if necessary, prevent the event from taking place on land controlled by the university or where the event is organised by the university. This involves having sufficient knowledge of potential risks, and then assessing the relevant risks, and ultimately making of a strategic decision in the interests of the University.

Security arrangements

- 6.36 Between 20-22 January 2025, Coordinator A, Professor Watego and Manager A each liaised with the University's security representatives regarding arrangements for the Debate and the Symposium, including:
- (a) On 20 January 2025, Coordinator A submitted an online request for additional security officers at the event on 22 January 2025;
 - (b) Manager A requested two security guards inside the Debate, and two outside the event;
 - (c) On 21 January 2025, Professor Watego provided a risk assessment for the Debate and the Symposium. Professor Watego indicated that Senator Lidia Thorpe may attend the Symposium on 23 January 2025; and
 - (d) On 22 January 2025, Coordinator A spoke with an Australian Federal Police Officer. That Federal Police Officer advised Coordinator A via email that the AFP would attend as "coverage" for Senator Thorpe on 23 January 2025.

The security arrangements were well prepared and suitable for the Debate and Symposium.

Media arrangements

- 6.37 The Carumba Institute determined that the Symposium and Debate sessions would be closed to live media coverage using formal media passes. However, media organisations IndigenousX, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, National Indigenous Times and National Indigenous Radio Station were in attendance. These attendances were on the basis of either purchased, or complimentary tickets, facilitated in 2024.
- 6.38 In mid-January 2025, arrangements were made between the Carumba Institute and the University's Media team to establish a Media Centre for the Symposium. The Media Centre would be located at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, the site of the Symposium.
- 6.39 Two representatives from the University's media team were scheduled to attend to facilitate any interview requests for speakers or panellists (subject to their availability). The Carumba Institute and the Media team agreed that a senior representative from the Carumba Institute would be available for interview.

7. The Debate

- 7.1 On 22 January 2025, the Debate was held from 2.00pm-4.30pm in the Gardens Theatre of the University's Gardens Point Campus in Brisbane. The Debate was facilitated by Professor Watego and Mr Richard Bell, Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Gurang Gurang man, artist and activist, was announced as the adjudicator of the Debate. The audience was advised by Professor Watego that they would have an opportunity to vote on the winner of the Debate via QR Code.
- 7.2 The Debate's audience was comprised of individuals from a range of backgrounds. This included academics, activists, anti-racist practitioners, students, and community members. Many of the attendees were Indigenous or from Indigenous communities. The Carumba Institute's records indicate the 400 tickets were sold out, but audience estimates reported by attendees to the Review have varied.
- 7.3 It can be noted at this stage that Associate Professor Yoni Nazarathy from the University of Queensland School of Mathematics and Physics was a member of the audience at the Debate (and some parts of the Symposium). He was not an academic involved in studying or researching issues surrounding racism, the theme of the Symposium. Associate Professor Nazarathy is a Jewish Australian who identifies as a Zionist and is a member of 5A. As previously mentioned in the Review, 5A had earlier expressed concern regarding the selection of speakers at the Symposium (including Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah). He attended both the Debate and some parts of the Symposium in this context. 5A had particular concerns about the Symposium's "bias" and the selection of some speakers at the Symposium and requested the Symposium not proceed at all. Associate Professor Nazarathy intended to record notes at the events. He was concerned that some speakers may engage in hate speech, but he also wanted to learn firsthand accounts from Indigenous Australians. He was acquainted with Ms Schwartz, although they had different views as evidenced by the various public positions taken by 5A (with which Associate Professor Nazarathy was associated) and the Jewish Council of Australia

(with which Ms Schwartz was associated).

7.4 Then, the following individuals were speakers at the Debate:

Speaker	Relevant background, role(s) or other affiliation
Ms Ruby Wharton	Indigenous community worker and activist.
Huda the Goddess	Sudanese woman and Australian Poetry Slam Champion.
Mr Nasser Mashni	President of the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network.
Ms Sarah Schwartz	Academic and human rights lawyer; Legal Director at the Human Rights Law Centre; Executive Officer of The Jewish Council of Australia.
Mr Kevin Yow Yeh	Wakka Wakka and South Sea Islander man; social worker; lecturer within the Carumba Institute and research student at the University; radio and television personality.
Ms Lorna Munro	Indigenous poet.
Dr David Singh	Academic in the Carumba Institute; Academic Director of the ARC Indigenist Health Humanities project.

7.5 At the Debate, each speaker was provided the opportunity to present to the audience. It is important to have an understanding of the tone of the Debate, an indication which can be seen from the extracts of the Debate presentations and the prize and various awards later referred to in the Review.

7.6 The Debate was intended to be a way of expressing distressing past behaviour, but to have fun at the same time, based upon each speakers' own experiences. It was a forum for each speaker to express in a humorous way views on complex ideas and concepts of racism generally. The audience and the speakers were engaged with each other and there was much laughter and joking during the Debate.

7.7 The presentations of Ms Schwartz and Ms Munro are of particular relevance to the Review.

Ms Schwartz's presentation

7.8 Ms Schwartz's presentation was intended to discuss her view that the Jewish identity and antisemitism had been "weaponised" by some political leaders. This included President Trump, Mr Dutton and other public figures identified by Ms Schwartz.

7.9 In her presentation, Ms Schwartz stated:

"I'm actually here today to suggest that it really shouldn't be any of us on the stage today, but it should be Peter Dutton, ScoMo, Christian Zionists, Israel's professional genocide launderers. You guys are the real anti racist heroes. So, for everyone who's been paying any attention you will have seen that Peter Dutton, I'm really sorry Richard [the Debate's judge who was seated on a mock throne], has actually taken the throne as Australia's chief anti-antisemitism warrior. Jews were the only group who got a special mention in his Christmas valedictory speech. Last year he mentioned us in 66 media

releases, double that of any other group even his favourite group Christians only got 8 mentions. Now it might be tempting amongst this spate of hate crimes to think that Dutton's found a heart. But the reality is that for Dutton and his ilk, us Jews are the perfect avatars for peddling racism, Islamophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment or as historian Max Kaiser says, we've become the super western canaries in the coal mine for civilisational decline. Dutton loves talking about how we've contributed to the Australian way of life and about how the fight against antisemitism is the fight for civilisation itself. Last week, he gave us a really serious warning and I want all of you to listen to this. Last week he said it's the Jews today, who is it tomorrow? Catholics, Protestants, atheists, are they the targets of the next hate crimes?"

7.10 These statements were accompanied by Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Slide 1 – Ms Schwartz's presentation

7.11 Ms Schwartz continued:

"To better understand I present you with Dutton's Jew. Dutton's Jew has really, really helpfully, provided a human shield for him to talk about some of these favourite topics - hating on migrants by arguing the Palestinian refugees are a threat to Jews, just generally hating on Muslims, protecting everyday Aussies from left-wing anti-war protestors and of course bolstering support for Israel as it commits a genocide. His party no longer needs to defend the right to be bigots because Dutton's Jew can do this for him and he's not alone in his low key obsession with Jews as stand ins for Western civilisation. Right-wing populists around the globe are doing the same. Dutch right-wing Islamaphobe Geert Wilders loves using Jews to rally against multicultural scum. Trump, famous anti-racist, I'm sorry it's true though, he leads the fight against antisemitism and against radical left thugs the mass importation of antisemitism. Christian Zionists do the same. Just in short these guys want all Jews to move to Israel to bring on the second coming of Jesus Christ, which will kill us along with all the other un-righteous definitely not creepy or antisemitic idea.

Anyway, in Australia these guys hold rallies they're called Never Again is Now, they host famous musicians like ScoMo whose track we just heard along with a motley crew of Islamophobic, transphobic and anti-immigration figures. Their co-founder, Pastor Mark Leach, is pretty clear that the fight against antisemitism is about fighting the radical left who hate the Judeo-Christian worldview that we all share. We'll just ignore the fact that he fraternises with neo-fascists who might not like the Judeo part of Judeo-Christian. But it's not just the far right. Dutton and his ilk are setting the

tone for the discussion of antisemitism across the political spectrum. As Nasser mentioned, the ALP has now appointed an antisemitism envoy who uses her position to silence Palestinians, quash anti-war protesters, lobbies for law and order crack downs, and Albo's just caving to Dutton's every demand when it comes to responding to antisemitism. Now it's only fair to say, I feel like this has been switching but anyway this is gonna be funny when I get to it, it's only fair to say that Dutton's Jew is not his own invention. It's a product of Israel and its lobbyists, right wing Zionist Jewish groups who are willing to side with basically anyone who supports Israel down into the moral abyss. They love Dutton's Jew. They strategically conflate Jewish identity with the state of Israel they can silence Palestinian voices by labelling them antisemitic. Dutton and the LNP are sensitive alright. See, they do need all Jews to be Dutton's Jew and all of us uniformly to support the Israeli, be uniformly threatened by Islam and migration and Palestinians. So, it's pretty inconvenient for them when they have to confront the growing number of us who are refusing to toe the party line. Trump's pretty honest about the Jews he likes and doesn't, saying that Jews who vote for Democrats hate their religion, should be ashamed of themselves. Dutton and the LNP are also pretty clear about the Jews they like and don't."

7.12 These statements were accompanied by Figure 2 below.

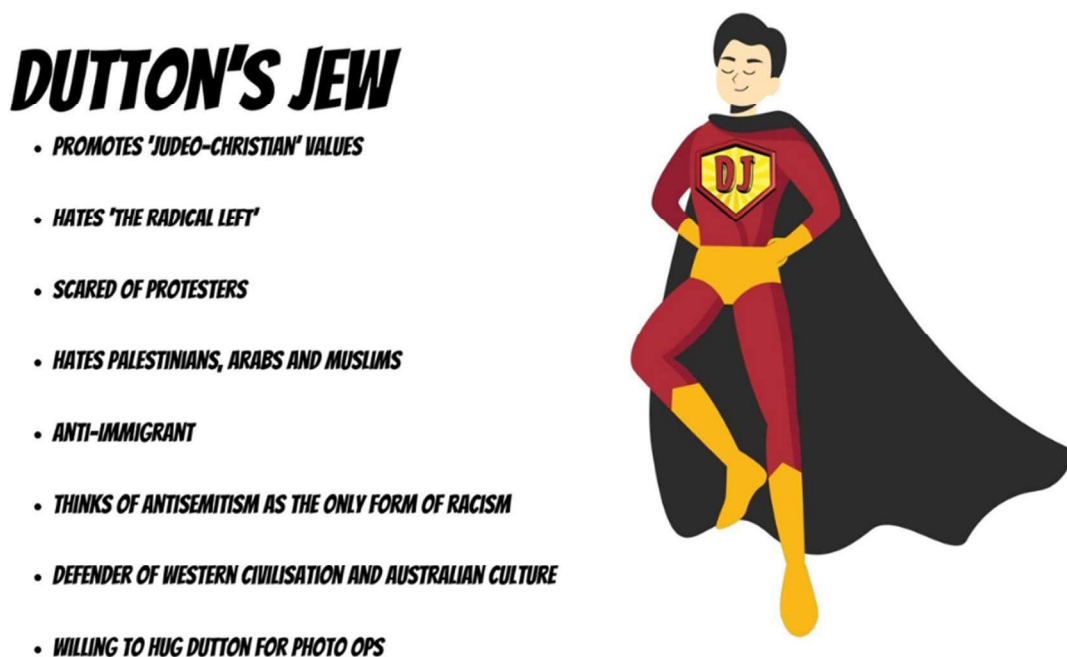


Figure 2: Slide 2 – Ms Schwartz's presentation

7.13 Ms Schwartz further stated:

"When Dr Elizabeth Strakosch, she's here today, and I gave evidence last year to the Scarr Senate inquiry into antisemitism. These two warriors who are pictured here, Paul Scarr and Sarah Henderson, they just didn't really like that we were invited. Scarr who has previously had to apologise for making antisemitic comments – we'll ignore that – who also attended those creepy Christian Zion Israelis I mentioned – started shouting at us for not giving him a personal experience of antisemitism – Sarah Henderson – or to his liking. Sarah Henderson, who conveniently doesn't see any issue with Islamophobia, demanded to prosecute us asking us whether we condemn, very seriously, the 'swotch-sticker'. See, Dutton's Jew isn't... Dutton's Jew isn't actually meant to be about fighting racism or antisemitism. Amongst a pretty real

rise in antisemitic incidents, Dutton's Jew is actually pretty bad for Jews themselves. Never ends well to flatten a group into a single archetype and silence any member who displays individuality. And you know these Jews have often been used as political footballs....".

7.14 These statements were accompanied by Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: Slide 3 – Ms Schwartz's presentation

7.15 Ms Schwartz also stated:

"In the present day the elite don't tell tales of Jewish devils pitted against pure Christians they tell tales of Dutton's Jew on the front lines of the fight against other racial groups who threaten western Judeo-Christian values. Jews are still the 'other', we're not expected to have solidarity across racial lines. Our identity is tied to a genocidal nation state and our safety is still at the whims of a ruling class and because none of this is actually about Jews. Dutton can still feed into neo-Nazi discourse by arguing that immigrants have created a housing crisis. He can still be part of the political party which has consistently faced scandals for alleged links to white supremacists, Trump can see very fine people in those chanting Jews will not replace us. He can entertain neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers at Mar-a-Largo for dinner at his inauguration. Musk can do what looks and smells like a 'sieg heil' at that inauguration and Zionist groups will come to his defence, so none of these antisemitism warriors would really care that neo-Nazis are making whacko conspiracies about left-wing Jews and our connections to the global cabal of Jewish Marxist academics, although I really do wish they would pass on the cabal's digits. It's honestly getting pretty hard to tell the difference between Zionist anti-antisemitism warriors and neo-Nazis. So, I guess all that to say is that while you, Dutton, take the Crown, and Trump and the far right, for completely capturing our national conversation on racism, I might just stick with being a bad Jew with neo-Nazis as my enemies rather than friends."

7.16 These statements were supported by Figure 4 below.

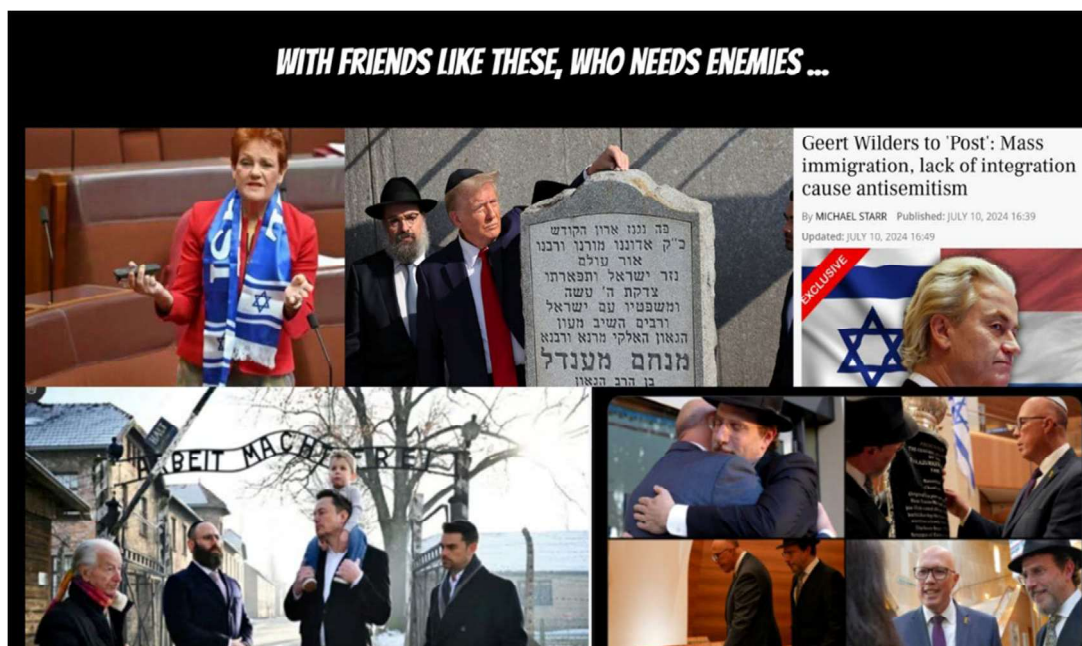


Figure 4: Slide 4 – Ms Schwartz's presentation

Ms Munro's presentation

7.17 A key concept within Ms Munro's comedic presentation was to propose that the solution to racism was to 'punch' a racist. For the purposes of the Review, the following represent relevant extracts from Ms Munro's presentation:

- (a) *"What can I say, listen, I can be up here and I can wax lyrical and I can deliver a monologue and all that sort of stuff but really, the solution to racism is quite simple. Punch a racist in the throat. My lawyer advised me to say allegedly, so, you just put that out there."*
- (b) *"The solution to racism is a punch directly in the face, throat or the garra."*
- (c) *"This boy used to catch the same bus as me and one of my friends used to like him. I didn't quite understand, anyway one day I was the focus of his attentions. This day the bus was full and we had to stand in the hallway whatever, didn't have a seat. He and his friends were giggling as I passed them and I asked what his problem was to which he replied, f**k off back to Redfern, you b***g. I pushed past all the people to go back to him and his friends. Did not say a word and punched him square in the face. This is the funniest yarn, actually, like we went rolling down the down the middle of the bus and we got kicked off the bus and we both had to wait at the bus station for the next bus. Both sitting there silently, still trying to, you know start shit. My mum thought it was the funniest thing ever when she got called to the school because I've got in trouble for fighting boys at an all girls school. It's safe to say that he never ever said a single word to me ever again and I have never been subjected to racial slurs ever since. Face to face anyway. It is the most efficient response."*
- (d) *"People say that we should call out racism when we witness it. I say punch that c**t in the face and when you do punch that c**t in the face remember that you are carrying the strength of all of your matriarchs before you and save your breath. There are clear correlations between racism and lacking of intelligence. Therefore, punch that dumb c**t in the face. It is acceptable to everyone young and old. We all can throw them and if you can't or prefer not to participate we can*

*assign someone to punch that c**t in the face for you. Satisfaction guaranteed. So the next time you're at a Christmas lunch and your racist uncle starts up, punch him in the face. Next time someone says Happy Australia Day punch that c**t in the face. Or one of my favourites over the last couple of years - Do you condone Hamas? Punch that c**t in the face. It's a universal language everyone understands knocking the coins out of people but not enough people get punched in the face. In conclusion, the solution to racism is *oos* *oos* punch that guy in the face..."*

7.18 These statements were accompanied by Ms Munro's four slides, as extracted below.



Figure 5: Slide 1 – Ms Munro's presentation

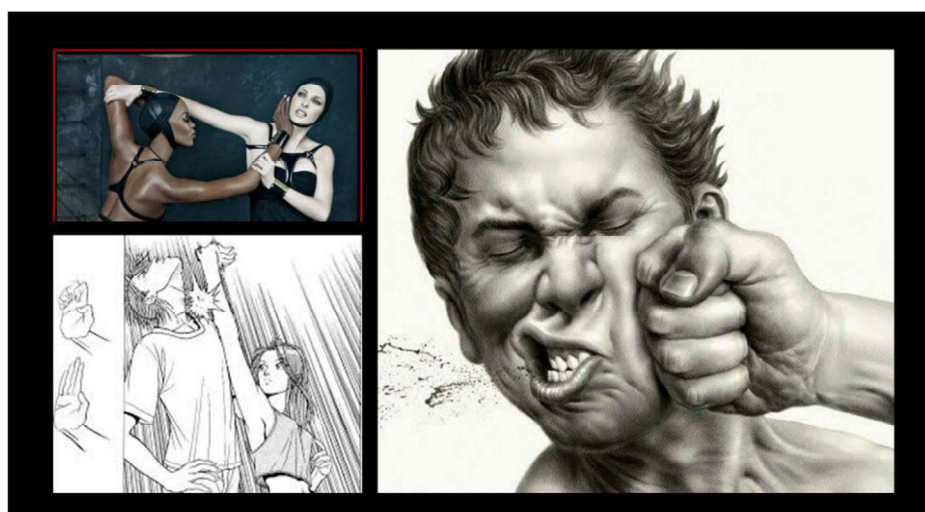


Figure 6: Slide 2 – Ms Munro's presentation

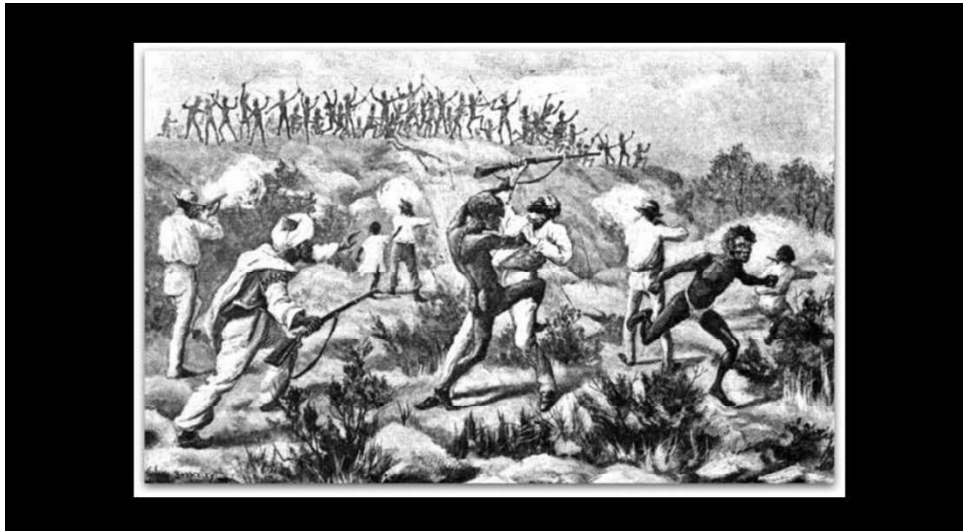


Figure 7: Slide 3 – Ms Munro's presentation



Figure 8: Slide 4 – Ms Munro's presentation

- 7.19 During the Debate, Associate Professor Nazarathy recorded part of Ms Schwartz's presentation and took images of parts of the Debate. This included the slide material. An image of the "Dutton's Jew" slide (Figure 2) from Ms Schwartz's presentation, and an image of the slide stating 'throat punch a racist today' (Figure 5) from Ms Munro's presentation were subsequently released in the media.
- 7.20 Associate Professor Nazarathy was the person who distributed the material to reporters from The Australian and The Courier Mail.

Other matters

- 7.21 The Review makes mention of another speaker at the Debate, namely Mr Nasser Mashni, President of the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network. Mr Mashni spoke of his own experience and lack of acceptance in the community generally. He also spoke of how the community celebrates multiculturalism while simultaneously struggling with basic empathy. He spoke of colonisation. At the end of his

presentation, he referred to lines from a folk singer Damian Dempsey's song "Colony", a protest song that relates to impacts of colonialism and highlights suffering inflicted on colonised peoples. At the end of his presentation, he called out the phrase "*from the river to the sea*". This expression does mean different things to different people – some see it as a call for genocide of the Jewish people in Israel, others deny this to be the case. In context of his earlier comments in Mr Nasser Mashni's presentation, the call was made to free Palestine, as he last called out to the audience "*when I say free, you say Palestine. Free*".

- 7.22 As previously alluded to, in keeping with the tone of the Debate, a prize and various awards were presented, some immediately after the Debate and some during the Symposium. The very nature and satirical aspect of the prize and awards made them more appropriate to have been given in the context of the Debate, than in the context of the Symposium. However, there were logistical reasons for the presentation of the awards at the Symposium.

Prize at the Debate

- (a) Mr Bell adjudicated the Debate and announced that the winner was Mr Yow Yeh.
- (b) The popular vote (via QR code) was awarded to Dr David Singh.
- (c) Professor Watego then noted that, "*given the prize is a Carumba t-shirt, I'm going to ask that you, as a good settler, pass it over to someone else who you think you'd like to give it to*".
- (d) Dr Singh then awarded the t-shirt to Mr Mashni.

Awards at the Symposium

On Day 2 in Session 3, the following "anti-racist" award results were announced:

- (a) Category one was the sovereignty most uncaded award for the "*best unapologetic anti racist action of 2024*". This was awarded to Professor Eddie Cubillo.
- (b) Category two was the making the most of social media award. This was to be given to individuals or groups who innovatively used social media as an anti-racist strategy. This was awarded to Dr Abdel-Fattah.
- (c) Category three was the right the recklessness award. The winner was the Sunday Paper.
- (d) Category four was the kiss my arts award. The winner was Ms Klimm–Flashblak.
- (e) Category five was the Farnsy award for loudest voice on the "*frontline*". The winner was Ms Wharton.
- (f) Category six was the award for the most racist anti-racist action in 2024. This was awarded to Mr Dutton. Ms Schwartz accepted this, in jest, "on behalf of" Mr Dutton.

- 7.23 Later on 22 January 2025, and after the Debate, a security manager advised Manager A and Ms Leanne Harvey, Vice-President, Administration and University Registrar, via email that his team reported no security issues or problems at the Debate. There has been no credible suggestion that those actually present at the Debate had concerns for safety or wellbeing. Any concerns over safety and wellbeing arose after the media coverage and primarily in response to and as a

result of that media coverage.

8. The Symposium

- 8.1 The Symposium was held on 23 January 2025 from 9.00am-4.00pm and 24 January 2025 from 10.00am-4.00pm in the Boulevard Room at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in Brisbane.
- 8.2 At around 10.00am on Thursday 23 January 2025, audience members were advised not to film or record people's speeches or words. Associate Professor Nazarathy understood attendees were permitted to take photographs only.
- 8.3 The below table outlines the details of 8 panels comprising the Symposium, across two days, and the individual speakers.

Session	Speaker	Organisational affiliation(s)
Day One – Thursday 23 January 2025		
Session One: Doing harm or doing good: the ethics of anti-racist practice	Dr Anna Carlson (Chair)	4ZZZ
	Ms Sara Saleh	Unknown
	Dr Eugenia Flynn	RMIT University
	Dr Amy McGuire	Carumba Institute, the University
	Ms Nadine Chemali	Sisters Inside Inc
Session Two: Action and Innovation in Anti-Racist Practice	Dr Elizabeth Strakosch (Chair)	University of Melbourne
	Dr Jamal Nabulsi	University of Melbourne
	Ms Maggie Munn	Human Rights Law Centre
	Ms Tasnim Mahmoud Sammak	Monash University
	Dr Helen Ngo	Deakin University
Lunchtime session	Professor Watego (Chair)	Carumba Institute, the University
	Professor Gracelyn Smallwood	James Cook University
	Dale Ruska	Unknown
	Dr Steven Hagan	Unknown
	Ms Angela Leitch	Carumba Institute, the University
	Ms Ruby Wharton	Sisters Inside Inc
	Senator Lidia Thorpe	Independent Senator
Session Three: 'Theory without practice ain't shit'. Are academics an asset or	Dr David Singh (Chair)	Carumba Institute, the University
	Dr Liz Conor	LaTrobe University

Session	Speaker	Organisational affiliation(s)
hindrance to anti-racism work? Building anti-racist community and action.	Dr Faye Rosas Blanch	Flinders University
	Dr Aaron Teo	University of Southern Queensland
	Dr Donna Cormack	University of Auckland
Session Four: Where the bloody hell are you?	Dr Jamal Nabulsi (Chair)	University of Melbourne
	Sam Watson	Unknown
	Dr Jordana Silverstein	University of Melbourne
	Uncle Wayne 'Coco' Wharton	Unknown
	A/Prof Crystal McKinnon	University of Melbourne
Day Two – Friday 24 January 2025		
Session One: What is success/excellence in anti- racism work: joy/justice	Dr Bryan Mukandi (Chair)	University of Wollongong
	Dr Raelene Nixon	Carumba Institute, the University
	Mr Vernon Ah Kee	ProppaNow.
	Larissa Baldwin-Roberts	GetUp
	Professor Ghassan Hage	University of Melbourne
Session Two: Burn it down or 'Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater'	Professor Chris Cunneen (Chair)	University of Technology, Sydney (UTS)
	Tarneen Onus-Browne	Common Threads
	A/Prof. Robyn Maynard	University of Toronto, Canada
	Ms Roj Amedi	Women's Legal Service, Victoria
	Ms Debbie Kilroy OAM	CEO, Sisters Inside Inc
Session Three: 'Pull yourself up by your bootstraps' or strategies for staying in the fight	Professor Fethi Mansouri (Chair)	Deakin University
	Dr Randa Abdel-Fattah	Macquarie University
	Mr Kevin Yow Yeh	Carumba Institute, the University
	Mr Charandev Singh	Lacey & Co
	Dr Helena Kajlich	Carumba Institute, the University
Session Four: Where to from here?	Professor Watego (Chair)	Carumba Institute, the University
	Senator Lidia Thorpe	Independent Senator, Indigenous Australian
	Professor Eddie Cubillo	University of Melbourne

Session	Speaker	Organisational affiliation(s)
	Adjunct Professor Uncle Phillip Mills	IndigenousX James Cook University
	Dr Barry Lavellee	Keewatinohk Inninniwiw Minoayawin, Canada
	Ms Leanne Betasamosake Simpson	University of Toronto, Canada
	Professor Greg Phillips	Abstarr Consulting

- 8.4 The Symposium brought together individuals from a range of backgrounds. Like the Debate, this included academics, activists, anti-racist practitioners, students, and other community members. The Indigenous community was strongly represented within the approximately 300 attendees.
- 8.5 Prior to the events being held, there were particular concerns raised about allowing Dr Abdel-Fattah to present as a speaker at the Symposium. At that time, the main concern was about the possibility (based on her previous public comments) of Dr Abdel-Fattah using hate speech of an antisemitic nature. This did in fact not occur. Then after the holding of the Symposium, concerns were raised about her repeating at her presentation her self-confessed approach to research and the fact she had received research grants from the ARC. Dr Abdel-Fattah's participation was specifically considered by the organisers of the Symposium prior to the Symposium itself. It was decided that she would not be prevented from attending as there was no basis to do so just because she had controversial views which she had already expressed publicly. Her attendance and comments at the Symposium did not cause any breach of any of the policies governing and impacting on visiting speakers. In particular, the comments of Dr Abdel-Fattah did not include any hate speech of an antisemitic nature. When considering visiting speakers, including VIP visitors, the University considers risk and strategic considerations and this analysis occurred in the case of the consideration of Dr Abdel-Fattah as a speaker at the Symposium.
- 8.6 There were also concerns raised about the attendance of Senator Thorpe, an elected representative to the Senate. Similar considerations relating to her attendance apply to the University's consideration of allowing Dr Abdel-Fattah to present at the Symposium. As referred to later, as a VIP visitor, the VIP Visitor Policy applied to Senator Thorpe.
- 8.7 Well after the program for the Symposium had been settled, a person did request to be added as a speaker in response to him hearing that Dr Abdel-Fattah proposed to speak at the Symposium. He did this on the basis that he held views opposed to hers and wanted to present his point of view. His request was not accepted. Putting aside logistical issues with adding another speaker at the time of the request, this was primarily on the basis that the purpose of the Symposium was to unify anti-racist efforts, not to put individual views against each other in relation to specific anti-racist struggles.
- 8.8 Any university has a difficult task when evaluating the appropriateness of an invitation of controversial speakers to any public event. However, solely on the basis that a speaker is controversial is not a reason to deny that person the opportunity to speak at a public forum. Other considerations referred to in the Review may come into play to lead to a proper conclusion a particular person should not be invited, or possibly should be uninvited. This may, for example, be because there is a risk to the safety and wellbeing of

staff, visitors and perhaps the speaker themselves, or a risk to the reputation of the University.

8.9 As previously indicated, as part of the audience Associate Professor Nazarathy attended some sessions of the Symposium on 23 January 2025 and returned to attend the final session, Session 4, on 24 January 2025.

8.10 At the conclusion of the Session 4 panel, Professor Watego addressed the audience:

"Thank you, Uncle Philip and all of the panel. We have special little gifts to say thank you. We are almost at the end of proceedings, I guess. I just wanna say thank you to all of you for being in community over these last few days. My voice is funny because I've not laughed so hard so frequently and all the while knowing that in creating a safe space we've had to deal with individuals vilifying us for existing, for speaking of racism, I mean, what a Black Lives Matter moment we're having right now, where when people of colour gather to speak of racism we have been accused of platforming hate speech and what I wanna say to the person in the room that recorded the Great Debate that had leaked it to the Australian and the Courier Mail that has put every person out here at risk because the Courier Mail and the Australian are waiting outside, shame on you, shame. [Members of the audience are also heard yelling 'shame']. Shame. And if you're opposed to this forum you should not have come here. No one forced anyone to be here."

8.11 An audience member then yelled:

"Punch him in the throat."

8.12 Professor Watego subsequently continued:

"No, we won't, because I'll be accused of promoting violence. And so I wanted to say to you there's more to come and I said, we walked out of the theatre on what day was it, Wednesday and we walked out and we were laughing and people said, that was so much fun. And I said, enjoy it now because we're gonna get it for a minute, and it's gonna swing back. And they're gonna come and sure enough they did. And we'll stand out the front here, and Uncle Graham said, well you know if we did this back in the '70s there would have been a line of police cars out the front to chuck us all in. So I want you to be strengthened by the violence that is being visited upon us in holding this event. Because how can you do anti-racist work if you haven't got racists coming for you? [Applause] Thank you. You know I just, I know there's gonna be a whole lot of investigations and a whole lot of meetings that are to come from this involving some of the individuals and of course myself. It's not my first rodeo, let me just say that. So bring it on, but what I have to say is I just, the power of this place of all of you, the spirit of which you came, not all of you, but most of you. And I just wanna, if I can, I wanna invite all the Carumba staff up here, who did all the things...."

8.13 Professor Watego later addressed the audience again as follows:

"...I don't really love academic institutions, but we in this moment have an institution of which they're coming for now because it was the one in this time that defended the right for us to exist in this forum and said we have a right to

academic freedom, that Palestinian researchers had a right to speak about their research. I mean, you're gonna talk about persecution. What is happening to Palestinian scholars right now and the cowardly nature of, not just academic institutions, but academics who come to spy and leak to the media that is shameful."

- 8.14 Immediately afterwards, a significant number of audience members repeated "shame", in unison.
- 8.15 It is important to appreciate that Associate Professor Nazarathy was not singled out as a Jewish person or Zionist. He has been previously identified by some in the audience of the Symposium as being associated with 5A and being a Zionist. In media interviews he did identify himself as the person who did provide the slides used by the media. Associate Professor Nazarathy was a member of the 5A, a Zionist and held strong views contrary to those of Ms Schwartz.
- 8.16 When it was announced that someone had circulated recordings to the media, attendees and Professor Watego called out "*shame*". There was no explicit reference to a Jewish member of the audience or to Associate Professor Nazarathy by name. Undoubtedly though, Associate Professor Nazarathy was recognised and known as the person responsible for the media coverage.
- 8.17 The "*shame*" incident should not have occurred. While the underlying concern about the sharing of the slides with the media may have been entirely legitimate, the approach taken in addressing the concerns publicly in this manner was not conducive to maintaining a respectful and inclusive academic environment.
- 8.18 However, there was no element of antisemitism in the incident – the calling out of "*shame*" was directed solely to Associate Professor Nazarathy for disclosing the slides to the media, and the subsequent media coverage that resulted, which took the slides out of context.
- 8.19 Associate Professor Nazarathy would have, understandably, felt humiliated and concerned by the reference by one audience member to "*punch him in the throat*". This was a reference to the presentation by Ms Munro – taken completely out of context by the individual audience member, not to be taken literally but as referring back to the context given by Ms Munro. Associate Professor Nazarathy was not labelled as racist – so the reference to "*punch him in the throat*" was inappropriate. By reviewing the recordings involving the "*shame*" incident, whatever Associate Professor Nazarathy's position was, there was no evidence of escalation of violence or racial abuse, and security and media staff in attendance had no security concerns relating to the safety of attendees. This is not to say that in the environment where society is experiencing antisemitic behaviour, Associate Professor Nazarathy generally may have not felt safe; he reportedly said to the media "*these days I look over my shoulder*".
- 8.20 Then, Professor Watego for her part was understandably concerned with the safety of some of the delegates attending, arising from the press attention that had been generated since the media coverage of the Debate. The media were not invited into either the Debate or the Symposium and in the environment in which the Debate and Symposium were held, participants did not wish to be photographed or approached for comment or interviewed. Understandably, the media coverage caused concern to some members of the audience, not the content of the Debate or Symposium.

9. Media coverage

9.1 During the Symposium, and in the weeks that followed, there was significant media attention regarding both the events.

9.2 Media attention primarily focused on:

- (a) the "Dutton's Jew" cartoon from Ms Schwartz's presentation at the Debate;
- (b) the "throat punch a racist today" slide from Ms Munro's presentation at the Debate;
- (c) Associate Professor Nazarathy's allegations of being "publicly shamed" at the Symposium in a coordinated humiliation. Associate Professor Nazarathy that this constituted a racist attack, and that he felt unsafe;
- (d) comments made by researcher Dr Abdel-Fattah in relation to her research methodology at the Symposium; and
- (e) public comments made by the University addressing the Debate and the Symposium.

It is useful to include three examples of the media coverage.

9.3 Associate Professor Nazarathy gave an interview to the media, and in The Courier Mail published on 25 January 2025, it was reported that:

"During the presentation, Ms Schwartz accused the Opposition Leader of hiding behind the Jewish community to promote a right-wing agenda. After footage of her talk was shared on social media, Ms Schwartz said in a statement the clip had been taken out of context, and that was pillorying 'Peter Dutton's racist, ignorant and monolithic conception of Jewish people.'

'Only opportunists could wilfully misrepresent my point, which is that Peter Dutton is exploiting the rise in anti-Semitism for political gain,' she said.

QUT vice-chancellor Margaret Sheil has apologised for the 'significant offence' caused.

On Friday, however, University of Queensland Associate Professor Yoni Nazarathy, said his fellow attendees stood and yelled "'shame' in unison" in his direction during the symposium, which he alleged was motivated by the leaking of the Dutton cartoon.

'It was coordinated humiliation. All I could do is sit there and try to exit respectfully', Professor Nazarathy, a lecturer in artificial intelligence, said.

He became emotional when speaking to The Australian about his 'public humiliation'.

'Maybe it was a lesson in racism,' he said, fighting back tears. 'So maybe I got my money's worth.'

'I felt like this was a racist attack on me and an unfortunately one because this is not what Australia needs right now.'

'As a person that identifies as Zionist and is Jewish in Australia, I don't feel safe these days, I look over my shoulder.'

Another cartoon shown at the symposium on Wednesday featured the slogan 'throat punch a racist today'.

While the presentation that accompanied the cartoon was 'satirical', Prof Nazarathy said that if 'you have a talk about punching a racist in the neck, and somebody talks and vilifies Zionists as though we are the devils ... then I feel somewhat unsafe'.

'As for the appropriateness of the speakers on the main symposium program, it is important that universities continue to engage in rigorous discussion and debate about the issues so important to our time. It is equally important that this is done in a way that is respectful and safe.

'I expect this event will be subject to further scrutiny in the upcoming parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism in Australian universities and we will fully cooperate with that inquiry.'.

9.4 There was also a press article in The Australian published on 23 January 2025:

"Jewish leaders warned the Queensland University of Technology its anti-racism symposium with a raft of anti-Israel speakers could "inflamm" anti-Semitism a week before the event went ahead.

The Australian Academic Alliance Against anti-Semitism (5A) last Friday wrote to the university saying some of the speakers scheduled for the conference had 'demonstrated a history of engaging in anti-Jewish racism, including spreading disinformation and disparaging stereotypes about Jews, doxxing of Jewish individuals, demonisation of the Jewish community, Holocaust inversion, and calls for the elimination of the Jewish state'.

It noted that none of its academic members were invited to speak at the conference, which billed itself as an event to 'strategise a co-ordinated anti-racism agenda ... while anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-blackness have unique expressions, they are deeply interconnected'.

The Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies also wrote to university management and said 'many of the speakers have a track record of anti-Jewish sentiment'.

The state's peak Jewish group asked the university to make 'effort to show leadership and ensure there is no hate speech at this event and no anti-Semitic rhetoric, dressed up as anti-Israel criticism.'

...

The QUT's National Symposium on Unifying Anti-Racist Research and Action described itself as an event 'in the lead-up to Invasion Day ... to strategise a co-ordinated anti-racism agenda', which listed controversial anti-Israel speakers including senator Lidia Thorpe, Macquarie University academic Randa Abdel-Fattah and author Sara Saleh.

Dr Abdel-Fattah has frequently been the subject of controversy since the October 7 terrorist attacks. In February last year, The Australian revealed that Dr Abdel-Fattah was one of the people who had disseminated the leaked details of hundreds of Jewish creatives.

In April, she led a 'kids excursion' to the University of Sydney's pro-Palestine encampment protest where primary school-aged children led each other in

chants of 'intifada' and 'Israel is a terrorist state'. More recently, Dr Abdel-Fattah publicly wished for 2025 to 'be the end of Israe'" and for the 'abolishment of the death cult of Zionism'.

Ms Saleh drew controversy in 2024 when she, while working at the Australian Human Rights Commission as a research officer, reportedly shared anti-Israel posts on social media, and then resigned following public scrutiny.

Senator Thorpe has repeatedly accused Israel of genocide and drew international headlines when she confronted King Charles during his recent trip to Australia."

- 9.5 Another press article in the Australian Jewish News published on 24 January 2025 included the following:

"NSW Jewish Board of Deputies said the symposium featured presentations that characterised Jews as 'hateful, racist and xenophobic'.

There's been outrage from the Jewish community over a controversial presentation at an 'Anti-racism' conference hosted by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies (JBD) has issued a scathing statement following presentations at the National Symposium on Unifying Anti-Racist Research and Action.

The NSW JBD said the symposium featured presentations that characterised Jews as 'hateful, racist and xenophobic – malevolently working with politicians for nefarious purposes'.

'The presentation would not have been out of place in antisemitic gatherings throughout the ages. It contained it all – laughter as Jews were the subject of public mockery, images of Rabbis as the subject of ridicule and the baseless demonisation of a community which has done nothing to warrant such hatred,' said NSW JBD.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) president Daniel Aghion has described the image of 'Dutton's Jew' as overtly antisemitic.

He said the fact that the display was presented as part of a so-called anti-racism symposium is bizarre.

'The image is clearly intended to stigmatise as evil and racist any Jewish person who might support the Coalition' said Aghion.

'It is ironic that such an obvious and disgraceful racist trope has been used at an event that billed itself as an anti-racism symposium.'"

10. Correspondence after the Debate and Symposium

- 10.1 It is important to appreciate that a significant proportion of this correspondence was prepared by individuals or organisations after viewing the media reports in relation to the Debate, and seemingly solely based upon the media reports. Significantly,

many individuals and organisations only had before them the cartoon slides, particularly the slide of "Dutton's Jew" without context.

- 10.2 Following the Debate and the Symposium, the University received correspondence from over 300 individuals and organisations. The correspondence expressed a range of concerns, including:
- (a) allegations of, or concerns about, antisemitism or the promotion of antisemitism at the Debate;
 - (b) concerns about the Carumba Institute's decision to host these events;
 - (c) concerns about the Debate exacerbating community tensions in the context of the Israel – Hamas conflict, and recent antisemitic acts;
 - (d) concerns about Ms Schwartz's presentation at the Debate, particularly her PowerPoint slides and the depictions of Jewish figures within them;
 - (e) concerns about Ms Munro's *"throat punch a racist"* comments and PowerPoint slides during her presentation;
 - (f) concerns the events were not inclusive and respectful for all staff and students;
 - (g) concern for the safety of Jewish staff and students; and
 - (h) concerns about alleged "racist" speakers being in attendance at the Debate and the Symposium. This correspondence particularly focused on speakers Ms Schwartz, Dr Abdel-Fattah and Senator Thorpe.
- 10.3 Conversely, other correspondence expressed support for the events. Key themes of that correspondence included:
- (a) support for the Symposium as a forum for academic freedom and connection;
 - (b) suggestions that the presentations, including of Ms Schwartz, at the Debate were taken out of context in media reporting;
 - (c) support for the speakers at the Debate, including Ms Schwartz, and at the Symposium;
 - (d) expressions of support for the Carumba Institute generally, and Professor Watego;
 - (e) expressions of support for Ms Schwartz and the Jewish Council of Australia; and
 - (f) criticism of the "Murdoch press" and Mr Dutton.
- 10.4 On 24 January 2025, Professor Sheil issued a statement which outlined that:

"I understand why the presentation at this pre-symposium event caused significant offence and I am sorry for the hurt caused to anyone within, and outside, the QUT community. I will undertake to review the circumstances of this presentation and take any action necessary. As for the appropriateness of the speakers on the main symposium program, it is important that universities continue to engage in rigorous discussion and debate about the issues so important to our time. It is equally important that this is done in a way that is respectful and safe. I expect this event will be subject to further

scrutiny in the upcoming parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism in Australian universities and we will fully co-operate with that inquiry."

- 10.5 On 5 February 2025, Professor Sheil and Ms Harvey attended Antisemitism Inquiry. At that time, Professor Sheil "*unreservedly repeat[ed]*" her earlier apology for 'the hurt and concern that these events caused both to our own staff and students and to the wider community'. Professor Sheil also stated that:

"On the afternoon before the symposium, Wednesday 22nd, the organisers staged an associated event, the Greatest Race Debate, at the Gardens Theatre on QUT's Garden Point campus. At the debate, external speakers showed slides that caused offence to a number of people. I subsequently apologised on behalf of the community for the hurt caused to anyone within and outside the QUT community as a result of those images and what was said there. I unreservedly repeat that apology here today for the hurt and concern that these events caused both to our own staff and students and to the wider community. QUT also reached out and apologised to an academic from another university who reported through the press that he had felt shamed in a symposium session. I am saddened and disappointed that these events overshadowed an important academic symposium on a very serious issue, especially as it relates to the lived experience of racism of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

11. Policies

- 11.1 In the Review, regard has been had to the following sections of the policies, procedures and guiding University documents to the extent relevant to the Review.

Booking of University Space Policy

- 11.2 The Booking of University Space Policy provides that the Vice-President (Administration and University Registrar) is responsible for granting approval for visiting speakers (other than hosting a VIP) to speak on University land or in connection to a University event. This responsibility may be delegated and is subject to compliance with the Protection of Academic Freedom Policy and Freedom of Speech.
- 11.3 Section 5 (Principles) of this policy outlines that the use of University facilities must:
- "(a) comply with University policy, related procedures and legislation;*
 - (b) not take precedence over teaching and learning, research or related activities;*
 - (c) not disrupt the University's teaching activities or examination venues while examinations are in progress;*
 - (d) not require adjustment to the academic timetable or other scheduled use if the use is for an external booking, except in exceptional circumstances;*
 - (e) be compatible with the University's functions, which includes the advancement and development of knowledge, and its application to government, industry, commerce and the community; and*

- (f) *consider the public interest in the promotion of critical and open inquiry on matters of public concern, in accordance with the standards of civil and evidence-based academic debate and the University's Protection of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy, when approving an external booking."*

11.4 Section 10 of this policy provides that the University's Security staff are authorised to direct people to leave a University space if:

- (a) they are disorderly/create a disturbance on University land;
- (b) they are not complying with University policies;
- (c) they have not booked the relevant space; or
- (d) they refuse to identify themselves.

Code of Conduct

11.5 Within the Code of Conduct, the University acknowledges its "responsibility to uphold the community's trust and confidence" and that a component of this is the behaviour and conduct of staff.

11.6 The Code of Conduct outlines the expectations, ethical principles, obligations and standards guiding the behaviour and actions of all staff members. This policy is complemented by the priorities set out in Connections - the QUT Strategy 2023 to 2027 and other specific policies.

11.7 Section 2 of the Code of Conduct provides that it applies to staff of the University and:

- (a) members of the Council or other University committees whether they hold office by election, nomination or appointment;
- (b) distinguished or honorary title holders, or other academic or research collaborators;
- (c) volunteers who contribute to (or act on behalf of) the University;
- (d) individuals who have been granted access to University property, services or infrastructure; and
- (e) consultants, independent contractors and agents undertaking services for, or acting on behalf of, the University.

11.8 The Code of Conduct is applicable in all circumstances where staff members are carrying out duties for the University. It also applies to other activities such as work-related functions, training events, travel, conferences, social media interactions and any situation in which an individual participates as a representative of the University.

11.9 Section 3 requires that all staff undertake their duties in compliance with the Code of Conduct and report suspected breaches to their supervisor, manager, or the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar. Staff are required to undertake training on the Code as required.

11.10 Section 4 provides that the Code of Conduct complies with the University's

commitment to academic freedom.

- 11.11 Section 6(10) outlines that the University values "*social justice and equal opportunity*" and seeks to create a safe, supportive and inclusive working and learning environment. Section 6(12) provides that staff members are expected to treat others with "*respect and consideration, and with proper regard for their human rights and the University's anti-discrimination compliance obligations*".
- 11.12 Section 6(13) provides that staff members must act in a "respectful manner" and be "*responsive and courteous in dealing with requests or enquiries from students, staff or others*".
- 11.13 Section 6(14) requires that staff members must treat all people equitably and fairly. Further, staff members must not unlawfully vilify, treat less favourably, make distinctions, or apply any exclusions/restrictions based on any irrelevant factor to a person's ability to work, study or access University services.
- 11.14 Section 6(15) outlines that staff members must not "*engage in behaviours which may be unwelcome or which may be distressing, offensive, humiliating or intimidating to others*". This is regardless of whether it occurs face-to-face, in writing, via email, via social networking sites, or via other electronic media.
- 11.15 Section 9(44) endorses the commitment of the University to academic and intellectual freedom.
- 11.16 Section 9(45) outlines the University's commitment to protecting the rights of staff freedom of expression as a necessary and essential feature of civil rights, as recognised in, and limited by, the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*.
- 11.17 Section 11(51) provides that, while undertaking University responsibilities or activities, staff members must comply with State and Commonwealth legislation, and fulfill obligations required by law (such as relevant registrations or certifications).
- 11.18 Section 11(54) outlines that staff members must comply with the University policies published in the Manual of Policies and Procedures which derive their authority from decisions or delegations of the Council or the Vice-Chancellor and President.
- 11.19 Section 11(55) provides that staff must comply with a lawful and reasonable direction from a University officer with appropriate authority (for example, a Supervisor, University security officer, or fire warden) on their conduct, behaviour and actions.
- 11.20 Section 11(57) outlines that staff members are expected to conduct their duties in a professional, responsible and conscientious manner. Staff members must also be accountable for their actions and decisions.
- 11.21 Section 14 sets out in some detail the consequences of non-compliance with the Code, and that alleged breaches or grievances and disputes may be dealt with under the Senior Staff Group Policy or Complaints Framework for Staff Policy.
- 11.22 This policy adopts similar definitions of "academic freedom" and "freedom of speech" as are found in the Protection of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy.

Complaints Framework for Staff Policy

11.23 This policy sets out the framework for the University to manage and resolve staff complaints.

Cultural Diversity and Anti-racism Policy

11.24 This policy outlines the University's commitment to an approach to cultural diversity and anti-racism which:

- "(a) promotes and encourages awareness, understanding and appreciation of the differences that exist amongst cultural groups and acknowledges and celebrates the breadth of experience and resources that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the University;*
- (b) recognises and acknowledges the particular significance of Indigenous Australians as the original owners of this land;*
- (c) recognises the responsibility of educational institutions to redress disadvantage and to overcome exclusion, bigotry, ethnocentrism, prejudice and racism; and*
- (d) respects and protects the rights of its students and staff to study and work in a discrimination-free environment."*

11.25 Section 3 of this policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff and students. In particular, the policy requires that managers and supervisors (within their authority) "ensure workplace and study environments are inclusive and free of racial discrimination and harassment" and "implement this Policy in all aspects of their areas' activities".

11.26 All students, staff and members of the University community are required to "behave in a manner which is non-discriminatory" and "support anti-racism, diversity and cultural inclusivity".

Event Planning and Resources document

11.27 This document outlines a variety of resources to assist event managers to plan and manager events.

11.28 The document provides that:

"All events require an Event Manager who is responsible for organising and managing the event and/or acting as a conduit for organising QUT support services. A person nominated and acting as an Event Manager requires appropriate skills and knowledge of procedure, policy, venues and supporting services ..."

Event Safety & Planning Checklist for University Events

11.29 This document outlines that event organisers have a duty of care under work health and safety legislation to ensure public safety and a safe working environment.

11.30 It provides that:

"Proactive planning by event organisers means nothing should be left to chance. Using a systematic process of identification, assessment and control, relevant safety risks can eliminate or minimise the risk of untoward outcome for the event and the organiser."

11.31 Checklists enclosed in this document must be completed and provided to the Facilities Management – QUT Campus Co-ordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

11.32 These documents refer to a number of example hazards and relevant risk assessment tools. The Review notes that, for example, protest activity or media reporting on events in a manner which may result in threats to the safety of participants in a University event are not included as possible hazards in these documents.

A Guide to Inclusive Event Planning at QUT

11.33 This guide provides that the University is a diverse community and any events and communications should *"respectfully promote acceptance and value of all people"*. The guide provides that event programs and panels should be as diverse as possible and include gender balance amongst presenters and *"representation by different diverse groups (particularly marginalised or under-represented groups)"*.

Information Privacy Policy

11.34 This policy outlines that the University's functions *"require the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information about students, staff, alumni, donors, partners and other clients"*.

11.35 This policy provides that personal information:

- (a) must be collected only where necessary and relevant to the University's functions and activities;
- (b) must be collected in a reasonable and transparent way;
- (c) should not be collected unless there is a *"specific and immediate use for it"*; and
- (d) may only be collected directly from an individual when an appropriate privacy notice is provided.

Protection of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy (Academic Freedom Policy)

11.36 This policy applies to all members of the University community including, the following:

- (a) members of the University Council or other University committees whether they hold office by election, nomination or members of the University Council or other University committees whether they hold office by election, nomination or appointment;
- (b) staff;
- (c) students;
- (d) distinguished or honorary title holders, or other academic or research collaborators;
- (e) volunteers who contribute to, or act on behalf of, the University;
- (f) individuals who have been granted access to University property, services or infrastructure;
- (g) consultants, independent contractors and agents undertaking services for, or acting on behalf of, the University; and
- (h) other visiting guests.

11.37 The policy applies to activities held physically on University campuses, on other University premises and at off-site venues. The Vice Chancellor and President's responsibility under the policy is to:

"Ensure compliance with principles for the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech. Provides advice on interpretation of this policy (without limiting the application of other QUT policies, procedures or agreements). Provide an annual report to Council detailing actions and developments at QUT regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech."

11.38 The Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar is required to assist the Vice-Chancellor and President in ensuring compliance with principles for the protection of academic freedom and freedom of speech, particularly with respect to human resources, student life and facilities management matters. They also grant approval for visiting speakers to speak on University land or in connection to a University event (this authority may be delegated). Similarly, the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar is required to determine conditions that shall apply to visiting speakers, including their classification as either invited or external visiting speakers.

11.39 In Section 5 – Principles, this policy states that:

"The enjoyment at QUT of academic freedom and freedom of speech is constrained only by law, and by QUT's obligations to the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct, to foster the wellbeing of staff and students, to the protection of its reputation, to the maintenance of academic standards, and to the protection of the corresponding rights of others."

11.40 Principle 2 provides that:

"A person's lawful speech on QUT land, using QUT facilities or in connection to a QUT activity shall not constitute misconduct nor attract any penalty or other adverse action by reference only to its content ...".

11.41 Principle 6 provides that:

"QUT shall determine the terms and conditions under which visiting speakers may speak on QUT land, using QUT facilities or in connection to a QUT activity, and in doing so may:

- (a) require compliance with booking procedures including the provision of requested information;*
- (b) distinguish between invited and external visiting speakers;*
- (c) refuse permission to speak on QUT land, using QUT facilities or in connection to a QUT activity where QUT assesses that the content of the speech is or is likely to:*
 - (i) be unlawful; or*
 - (ii) prejudice the fulfilment by QUT of its duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students;*
- (d) refuse permission to speak on QUT land, using QUT facilities or in connection to a QUT activity where the content of the speech is or is likely to involve the advancement of theories or propositions which fall below scholarly standards to such an extent as to be detrimental to QUT's character as an institution of higher learning or interfere with its duty to the community to maintain such standards; and*
- (e) require a person or persons seeking permission for the use of QUT land or facilities for any visiting speaker to contribute in whole or in part to the cost of providing security and other measures in the interests of public safety and order in connection with the event at which the guest is to speak".*

11.42 Principle 7 provides that other than as outlined within Principle 6, the University *"shall not refuse permission for the use of its land or facilities by a visiting speaker, nor attach conditions to its permission, solely on the basis of the content of the proposed speech by the visitor".*

11.43 In this policy:

- (a) the "Duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students" means:*

"the duty to ensure that no member of staff and no student suffers disadvantage or adverse discrimination on any basis recognised at law including race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion and political belief the duty to ensure that no member of staff and no student is subject to threatening or intimidating behaviour by another person or persons on account of anything they have said or proposed to say in exercising their freedom of speech the duty to exercise measures to prevent any person from using lawful speech which a reasonable person would regard, in the circumstances, as intended or likely to: humiliate, intimidate, vilify, harass, defame or bully other persons; or incite others to engage in conduct which is itself intended or likely to humiliate, intimidate, vilify, harass, defame or bully

other persons; and does not otherwise extend to a duty to protect any person from feeling offended, shocked or insulted by the lawful speech of another."

(b) "Academic freedom" means:

- "(a) the freedom of academic staff and other staff engaged in academic work to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research;*
- (b) the freedom of staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research;*
- (c) the freedom of staff and students to express their opinions in relation to QUT;*
- (d) the freedom of staff to participate in professional or representative bodies;*
- (e) the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations;*
- (f) the autonomy of QUT in relation to the choice of academic courses and offerings and the ways in which they are taught, the choices of research activities and the ways in which they are conducted, and the choice of engagement activities and the way in which they are conducted".*

(c) "Freedom of Speech" means the *"freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of choice, other than as restricted or prohibited by law".*

(d) "Speech" means *"all forms of expressive conduct including oral speech and written, artistic, musical and performing works and activity and communication using social media".*

Social Media Policy

11.44 The Social Media Policy requires that, when using social media in both a professional and personal capacity, students, staff and other members of the university community comply with relevant laws and policies. They are also required to:

- (a) comply with laws about copyright, privacy, defamation, harassment, discrimination and human rights;
- (b) engage only in courteous and respectful discussion and respect others' rights to their own opinions and beliefs;
- (c) not publish content that is defamatory, false or misleading;
- (d) not disclose information that is confidential;
- (e) not post comments or encourage comments that are racist, offensive, sexist, obscene or incite hate;
- (f) not impersonate another student, staff member or other member of the University community;
- (g) not post identifiable images without the permission of the individual/s; and

- (h) ensure it is clear that views and comments expressed publicly via social media are their own and are not perceived to be made on behalf of the University (unless they are authorised to do so).

Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2025

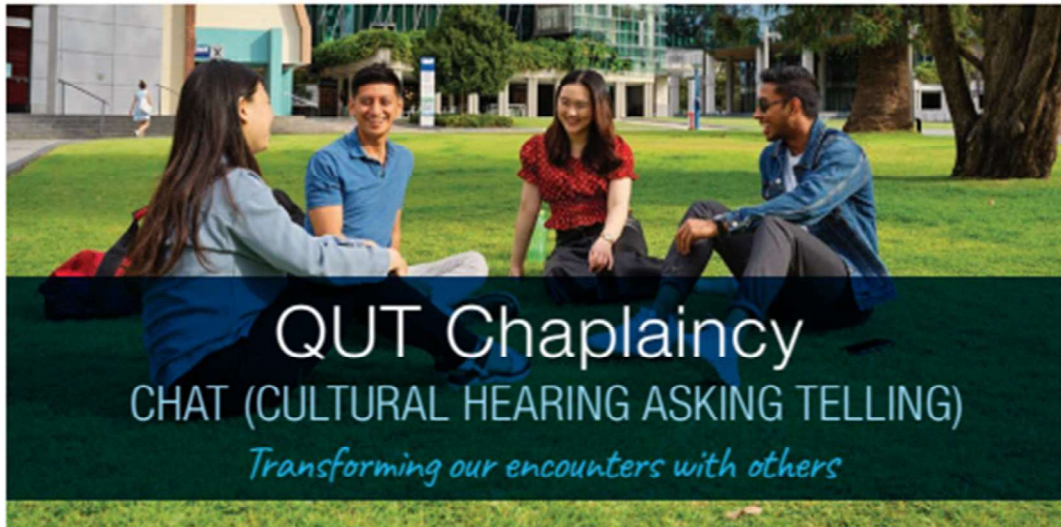
11.45 The Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan outlines the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion. This action plan outlines four main priority areas for the University to ensure inclusion:

- (a) inclusive culture;
- (b) services and amenities;
- (c) community and connections; and
- (d) research, innovation and development.

Priority Area 3 (Community and Connections) identifies, as one of its action plans, the need to provide opportunities for staff and students across the University to learn about faith and religious beliefs and become active agents in the creation of an inclusive culture. This would be achieved by running short form CHAT programs (Cultural Healing Asking Telling) in conjunction with an external non-for-profit organisation. This was to enable participants to gain skills and confidence to listen and engage with people who are different to them.

Appendix 2 of the Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan then contains the University's Chaplaincy Guidelines for Dialogue in interacting with others. This is extracted at Figure 9 below.

Appendix 2 – CHAT Guidelines for Dialogue



QUT Chaplaincy
CHAT (CULTURAL HEARING ASKING TELLING)
Transforming our encounters with others

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

Learning to explore faith in healthy ways is an important skill for life. These simple guidelines ensure a safe place for people to talk faith, make friends and change lives.

LISTEN to what everyone has to say	DO NOT TELL OTHERS WHAT THEY BELIEVE, but let them tell you	DO NOT JUDGE PEOPLE here by what some people of their faith or community do	
ACKNOWLEDGE SIMILARITIES and differences between our faiths	SPEAK POSITIVELY of your faith, rather than negatively about other people's	BE HONEST in what you say	DO NOT FORCE PEOPLE to agree with your views
DO NOT TREAT SOMEONE AS A SPOKESPERSON for their faith or culture	MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GET ALONG WITH EVERYONE regardless of their faith, gender, ethnicity or age	RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE, even if you disagree with their views	

Special thanks to SU Australia for permission to use these guidelines

QUT the university
for the real world

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Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan | 2023–2025

Figure 9: Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan – Guidelines for Dialogue

VIP Visits Policy

11.46 The purpose of this policy is to coordinate the University's efforts in welcoming VIPs and promoting University engagement. The policy sets out the principles relating to the invitation and hosting of VIPs at a University campus or event. It also assigns responsibility over the VIP visit procedure and processes.

11.47 Under section 3 of this policy, responsibilities are allocated as follows:

Position	Responsibility
Vice-Chancellor and President	May reallocate hosting responsibility, or revise or cancel a proposed VIP visit based on risk or strategic considerations. Establishes VIP visit procedure.
Director, Communications and Government Relations	Manages VIP visits based on the risk, or type of visit, or at the request of the Vice-Chancellor and President. Approves VIP visit procedure.
Manager, Facilities Services	Ensures that adequate campus access and services are coordinated for VIP visits.
Manager, Security and Emergency Management	Ensures that adequate campus access, security and risk management are provided for VIP visits.
Manager, Integrated Transport Services	Ensures that adequate vehicle access is provided for VIP visits.
Heads of organisational area	Approves hosting of VIP visits after assessing risk and consultation with stakeholders according to the VIP visit procedure. Adjudicates in the event of doubt about whether a proposed visitor meets the definition for the purposes of this Policy. The context and purpose of a visit may play a role in determining whether it is subject to this Policy.
Staff hosting a VIP visit	Hosts VIP visits in accordance with the VIP visit procedure.
Protocol Officer, Communications and Government Relations	Approves procedures for hosting international delegations and visitors.
Director, Communications and Government Relations	Advises Vice-Chancellor and President on strategic considerations. Interfaces with VIP where relevant to government relations and stakeholder liaison and on direction from the Vice-Chancellor and President.
Vice-President Engagement and Chief Marketing Officer	Advises Vice-Chancellor and President on strategic considerations. Interfaces with VIP where relevant to Engagement Portfolio and on direction from the Vice-Chancellor and President.

11.48 The Organising VIP Visitors Procedure requires that the staff hosting the VIP:

- (a) receive approval to host from the head of their organisational area;
- (b) complete a VIP Risk Assessment form and receive risk assessment approval from the Manager, Facilities Services;
- (c) complete the Notice of VIP Visit form at least 10 working days prior to the visit and communicate changes to the relevant stakeholders. This form sends a Notice of VIP Visit to the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President (**OVCP**), the Manager (Facilities Services), Manager (Security and Emergency Management), and any relevant organisational areas selected. VIP hosts are not required to receive approval from the OVCP, but must provide the notice; and
- (d) advise other university stakeholders – for example, technology and events teams.

11.49 Section 4 (Principles) of the VIP Visits Policy, requires that VIP visits align with the following principles:

- (a) the University requires a coordinated/whole-of-institution approach to VIP visits;
- (b) VIPs must be afforded respect, courtesy and formality and VIP visits will be coordinated with professionalism, proper care and attention;
- (c) VIP visits require a coordinated and streamlined procedure involving various University stakeholders;
- (d) VIPs should be provided with a single point of contact for University liaison. Where possible this liaison will be the final decision-maker for variations and logistics on the day of the visit;
- (e) Communications and Government Relations should ensure that the appropriate organisational areas are informed and attentive to their responsibilities with regards to VIP visits; and
- (f) in the spirit of respectful evidence-based discourse and in compliance with the University's Code of Conduct - Staff and Code of Conduct - Student, the University encourages open debate and freedom of speech and recognises the rights of staff and students to express their views on matters of public interest.

11.50 The definition of a VIP is broad and includes government representatives and high-profile academic, business, community, education, industry research or social leaders.

Queensland University of Technology Enterprise Agreement (Academic Staff) 2022 – 2025

11.51 Clause 32 of the *Queensland University of Technology Enterprise Agreement (Academic Staff) 2022 – 2025 (Academic Staff EA)* guarantees intellectual and academic freedom are "*integral and essential values of a thriving University culture*".

11.52 This clause provides that "*intellectual and academic freedom will be recognised and transparently supported by the University, as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Academic freedom entails academic staff having the opportunity to develop expertise and explore*

ideas within their areas of expertise, including the academic judgement and scrutiny of their peers". It provides that the rights of academic freedom that will be recognised and protected include the rights to:

- (a) engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to
- (b) public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research;
- (c) teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research
- (d) related to their field of expertise;
- (e) express their opinions in relation to the University; and
- (f) participate in professional and representative bodies.

11.53 Clause 32.3 provides that, in exercising this intellectual and academic freedom, academic staff members *"have the right to express unpopular or controversial views."* Further, in exercising these rights, staff are *"bound by the general principles of intellectual rigour, scientific enquiry, and ethical/professional behaviour. Provided that a staff member does not harass, vilify, defame or intimidate or infringe upon the rights of others they will not be subject to disciplinary action"* under the Academic Staff EA for exercising intellectual and academic freedom.

Queensland University of Technology Enterprise Agreement (Professional Staff) 2022 – 2025

11.54 Clause 46 of the *Queensland University of Technology Enterprise Agreement (Professional Staff) 2022 – 2025* provides for the recognition, and protection, of staff members' intellectual freedom to:

- (a) engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, within the scope of their employment;
- (b) express their opinions in relation to the University; and
- (c) participate in professional and representative bodies.

11.55 Clause 46.2 provides that staff members have the right to *"express unpopular or controversial views. Provided that a staff member does not harass, vilify, defame or intimidate or infringe upon the rights of others they will not be subject to disciplinary action"* for exercising intellectual freedom.

12. Discussion

12.1 It is useful in relation to the Code of Conduct, Academic Freedom Policy and Booking of University Space Policy to refer to a number of their overarching requirements placed upon all staff relevant to the Review, which are:

- (a) the advancement and development of knowledge;
- (b) considering the public interest in the promotion of critical and open enquiry on matters of public concern;
- (c) acting in accordance with standards of civil and evidence-based academic debate;

- (d) upholding the community's trust and confidence in the University;
- (e) treating each other with respect and consideration and proper regard for people's human rights;
- (f) not engaging in behaviour that may be unwelcome or which may be distressing, offensive, humiliating or intimidating to others;
- (g) promoting a discrimination free environment;
- (h) supporting anti-racism, diversity and cultural inclusivity;
- (i) the enjoyment of academic freedom and freedom of speech to be constrained only by law and by the University's obligations to the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct, to foster the well-being of staff and students to the protection of its reputation, to the maintenance of academic standards, and to the protection of the corresponding rights of others; and
- (j) not harassing, vilifying, defaming, intimidating or infringing upon the rights of others.

In the main, each of the overarching requirements was adhered to by those staff involved in the Debate and Symposium. The particular incidents that have caused controversy following the media coverage are specifically addressed in the Review.

Compliance with the Code of Conduct

It is convenient to deal with the following four questions together.

Did the University's organisation of the Debate and Symposium align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Code of Conduct?

Did the content of presentation material and conduct of presenters at the Debate and Symposium align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Code of Conduct?

Did any University staff involved with the organisation of the Debate and Symposium breach the Code of Conduct?

Does the University need to review its Code of Conduct in relation to the organisation of events and, if yes, are there any recommended changes to the Code of Conduct?

- 12.2 The organisation of the Symposium and the intent and purpose of this event did align with the Code of Conduct. The Review has not identified any breaches of the Code of Conduct by University staff specifically regarding the decision, in principle, to organise, or the subsequent organisation of, the Symposium.
- 12.3 The Symposium was convened with the explicit aim of bringing together researchers, community members, and policymakers to discuss and promote anti-racist initiatives. It was intended to serve as a platform for collaborative dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the advancement of social justice.
- 12.4 The Symposium was an important academic symposium dealing with an issue all Australians needed to consider and investigate. The Symposium itself was regarded by most of those who actually attended as highly successful, connecting academic

activists and community leaders interested and involved in anti-racism generally. The basic concept was that whilst anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism operate in separate ways, they are fundamentally interconnected. The aim of the Symposium was to create a cross-institutional, inter-disciplinary and inter-sectional approach to combatting racism.

- 12.5 The Debate, held prior to the Symposium, had as its stated purpose, to lift and shift the nature of race conversations using humour as pedagogy. It featured individual speeches that intended to humorously critique conversations around race in Australia. While the tone was satirical, an underlying objective was to provoke thoughtful reflection and challenge prevailing narratives in a respectful and engaging manner.
- 12.6 The intent of these events did align with the University's commitment in the Code of Conduct to social justice and equal opportunity, and the protection of freedom of expression.
- 12.7 It is then important to consider the Debate separately. The Debate had very real potential to breach aspects of the University's Code of Conduct, if only for the reason of its timing, format and potential for divisive views on currently sensitive public issues being raised.
- 12.8 More careful consideration should have been given to whether the Debate in January 2025 should have been conducted at all. When deciding to hold and proceed with the Debate, an emphasis was placed on the notion of freedom of speech and the role of universities to engage in intellectual debate. However, other relevant and important factors should have been more carefully considered not in isolation but in combination: the timing of the Debate in the current social and political climate following 7 October 2023, the presence of controversial participants and presenters, a real possibility of there being unnecessary provocation against a particular group, and the content and the form of presentations as promoted. A question that should have been asked in considering whether to hold the Debate of the nature promoted was: "What could go wrong?".
- 12.9 The Debate, although ticketed, was effectively open to the public and its content could foreseeably be expected to be disseminated to other members of the public who did not actually attend the Debate. This could lead to the possibility of harm to individuals and the reputation of the University itself, in the event that aspects of the content of the Debate could be taken out of context.
- 12.10 Understandably, Professor Watego was committed to the Debate. Both Professor Watego and Ms Leitch, in considering the views of those opposed to the holding of the Debate, focused on the freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom. Both had no intention of acting contrary to the Code of Conduct. The overall intention was to reflect the University's values and ethical commitments. Professor Sheil did not have knowledge of the Debate, and as it turned out, the ultimate decision to proceed with the Debate was left to Professor Watego and Ms Leitch.
- 12.11 A more careful analysis should have been undertaken, with the benefit of a multitude of councillors from the University, which would have provided a broader and better informed perspective with a proper check and balance on the decision of the Carumba Institute to hold the Debate.

- 12.12 Apart from the overarching requirements placed upon all staff as referred to above, there are aspects of the Code of Conduct which are relevant for consideration in assessing compliance with the Code of Conduct:
- (a) Section 1(1) in which the University acknowledges its responsibility to uphold the community's *"trust and confidence"*.
 - (b) Section 6(12) requires staff members to *"treat others with respect and consideration"*.
 - (c) Section 6(15) outlines that staff must not engage in behaviour which may be *"unwelcome or which may be distressing, offensive, humiliating or intimidating to others"*.
- 12.13 While some controversy emerged following the media reporting of Ms Schwartz's and Ms Munro's Debate slides, it is important to consider the full context of the event and the presentations of both Ms Schwartz and Ms Munro (as set out above). The slides, when considered with the accompanying spoken words, were not antisemitic in nature nor were they found to be offensive to those actually present at the Debate. The intent of the presentations remained aligned with the University's standards and the purpose of the Debate.
- 12.14 In the context of the Debate, expectations of its content were evident from its promotion. Just focusing on the audience in attendance, whilst undoubtedly the content was not respectful to the targets of the criticism, and would be unwelcome to them, no breach of the Code of Conduct was apparent. The real issues arose once the content of various slides was disclosed (out of context) to the media.
- 12.15 Nevertheless, it can be accepted that the slides, when taken out of context, including in the media reporting, were distressing to some and could reasonably be perceived as antisemitic and offensive. As mentioned already, it was foreseeable that the content of the Debate would be made public and the choice of slides was a matter that should have been considered by those organising the Debate.
- 12.16 In any event, the intent and purpose of the Carumba Institute's Debate and Symposium were both consistent with the University's Code of Conduct. The organisation of these events was designed to promote inclusive dialogue, respect for diversity, and critical engagement with complex social issues.
- 12.17 It is then necessary to give consideration regarding individuals of particular relevance to the Review, namely Ms Schwartz and Ms Munro – neither of whom are members of staff of the University.

Ms Schwartz

- 12.18 In relation to antisemitism, it has been said that there is an ancient reservoir of hostile ideas about Jews that have built up over centuries. Jews have, for a long while, been sometimes depicted as cunning, malevolent and all powerful. These have been Jewish motifs which people have drawn from either unconsciously or deliberately. Similarly, there may have historically been a tendency to view Jews and their activities with demonic superhuman powers. This comment is relevant to

the depiction by Ms Schwartz of "Dutton's Jew" which, when taken out of context, could be seen with this historic tendency in mind.

- 12.19 On 23 January 2025, Ms Schwartz and the Jewish Council published a statement on all of their social media accounts which made it clear that her speech pilloried Mr Dutton's racist, ignorant and monolithic conception of Jewish people. Relevantly, the statement read:

"In my presentation, I referred to Dutton's racist conception of Jewish people as 'Dutton's Jew' – Dutton's racist conception of Jews, and not actual Jewish people. Against this conception, I spoke about how Jewish people are diverse and about how the Jewish community is not a monolith. Only opportunists could wilfully misrepresent my point, which is that Peter Dutton is exploiting the rise of antisemitism for political gain."

- 12.20 Ms Schwartz used satire in the Debate. In the course of her presentation, she likened Mr Dutton to President Trump. Ms Schwartz criticised their hostility to many minority groups while suggesting that they opportunistically support Israel and its supporters, no matter what. One of the slides she used – depicting a character called "Dutton's Jew" – pilloried Mr Dutton for treating the Jewish community as monolithic, and as defenders of "Western civilisation" from other racial minorities.
- 12.21 As mentioned already, Associate Professor Nazarathy (who has opposing views to Ms Schwartz on certain matters) was in the audience. Ms Schwartz's slide was photographed and delivered to The Australian and the Courier Mail. Devoid of context, it has been interpreted by some as deploying a racist stereotype. With context, it is clear it criticises Mr Dutton's stereotyping of the Jewish community.
- 12.22 Ms Schwartz's depiction of "Dutton's Jew" was not critical of Jewish people themselves, but of the way in which political figures may typecast Jewish identity to serve particular narratives. Ms Schwartz intended to critique what she perceives as the political weaponisation of Jewish identity and antisemitism by certain political leaders and the depiction was borne out of her concern that Mr Dutton's rhetoric regarding Jewish people reduced the Jewish identity to a singular, politically convenient archetype.
- 12.23 Clearly to the audience physically attending the Debate, Ms Schwartz identified the context in which her slides were shown. The audience at the Debate who viewed the slide in the context of Ms Schwartz's speech would have understood the context. However, it was foreseeable that the slides could be taken out of context and in fact have been, after being publicly shown through the media (without context and the clarity of context given by Ms Schwartz).

Ms Munro

- 12.24 As discussed already, Ms Munro's satirical presentation focused on the concept of punching a racist person as a proposed solution to racism.
- 12.25 In recent years, the phrase "punch a racist" or variations like "punch a Nazi" gained prominence as a statement against racism, white supremacy, and fascism. This was particularly the case in online and activist spaces. This phrase gained widespread attention in around 2017 when white nationalist Mr Richard Spencer was punched

during a televised interview. As a result, this sparked viral memes and discussions about the ethics of using violence against hate speech or extremist ideologies.

- 12.26 The meme, similar to the concept reflected in Ms Munro's slides, often depicts or references individuals standing up to racism or fascism, sometimes using humour or exaggerated imagery to symbolise resistance. While some see it as a call to take a firm stance against bigotry, others debate its implications, particularly around the use of violence or the potential for escalating conflict. The meme's history is intertwined with broader cultural movements opposing systemic racism, fascism, and hate groups.
- 12.27 Ms Munro's presentation, while provocative in tone, was clearly satirical in nature and delivered within the context of a comedy event. Her use of the phrase "*punch a racist in the throat*" was not intended as a literal call to violence, but rather as a thematic reference to a well-known internet meme (at least amongst attendees) that emerged in activist and online spaces. In this context, Ms Munro's presentation can be understood as engaging with this cultural discourse through satire and exaggeration, rather than promoting physical aggression.
- 12.28 Nevertheless, the language used and approach taken may have caused a misunderstanding about the University's values, noting the University makes clear it does not condone violence.
- 12.29 It is important to recognise that Ms Munro is an Indigenous woman, and her work often reflects the lived experiences and frustrations of marginalised communities confronting systemic racism. Her use of satire and strong language, including expletives, is consistent with a long tradition of political and cultural commentary in comedy that seeks to challenge dominant narratives and provoke thought.
- 12.30 This language may be offensive to members of the general public. That is a reasonable reaction to this language. However, such language is not uncommon in comedic settings, particularly those that deal with social justice themes. Importantly, there is no indication that Ms Munro's presentation was poorly received by the audience in attendance having regard to the context.
- 12.31 The use of humour, even when sharp or confrontational, plays a significant role in public discourse, especially for communities that have historically been silenced or marginalised. Ms Munro's speech fits within this tradition, using satire to highlight the absurdity and harm of racism. While the language and imagery may be confronting, it serves a rhetorical purpose rather than inciting real-world violence. In this context, and within a comedic presentation, Ms Munro's use of this concept may be better understood.

Professor Watego at the Symposium

- 12.32 The Review has considered concerns regarding Professor Watego's conduct in the final session of the Symposium, particularly in relation to her public comments directed at Associate Professor Nazarathy. This has been discussed in more detail above. While Associate Professor Nazarathy was not named explicitly, he was identifiable to at least some of the audience. Associate Professor Nazarathy reasonably felt intimidated by Professor Watego's remarks. However, it is to be stressed that the remarks were not antisemitic and were motivated to respond to Associate Professor Nazarathy's actions

in providing the slides to the media which were published with the resultant adverse attention being given to the University and the Carumba Institute.

- 12.33 Professor Watego's statements – referring to "*academics who come to spy and leak to the media*" and declaring "*shame, shame on you*" – were made in a public forum and the word "*shame*" was echoed by many members of the audience. These comments being perceived by Associate Professor Nazarathy as humiliating or distressing is understandable, particularly given the power dynamics and the charged atmosphere of the event. This was further compounded by an audience member's interjection, albeit in jest, referencing the satirical theme of "*punch him in the throat*".
- 12.34 While Professor Watego addressed this interjection by stating "*No, we won't, because I'll be accused of promoting violence*", this statement by the audience member, in the context of the earlier "*shame*" chant, contributed to the perception of hostility.

Other comments

- 12.35 The Code of Conduct does require that staff members comply with the Academic Freedom Policy and, relevantly, Principle 6 referred to later in this Review. As discussed in relation to the Academic Freedom Policy, no proper or adequate consideration was given to the content of the presentations at the Debate prior to the event being held.
- 12.36 Otherwise, the content of the material and conduct of the presenters in the context of the Debate and the Symposium did align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- 12.37 Finally, as to the content of the Code of Conduct itself, the Code of Conduct is fit for purpose and no recommendation is made relating to changes to the Code of Conduct.
- 12.38 However, Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide future guidance regarding public events, the implementation of University policies and the training of staff and academics.

Compliance with Academic Freedom Policy

It is to be noted that the Academic Freedom Policy does not just deal with academic freedom, but also with freedom of speech more generally.

It is convenient to deal with the following three questions together.

Did the University's selection of presenters for the Debate and Symposium align with the ethical principles, obligations and standards outlined in the Academic Freedom Policy?

Was the content of the Debate and Symposium in accord with the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech as detailed in the Academic Freedom Policy?

Does the University need to review its Academic Freedom Policy in relation to the organisation of events and, if yes, are there any recommended changes to the Academic Freedom Policy?

- 12.39 The review has already set out the relevant facts surrounding the Debate and Symposium relating to these questions.
- 12.40 The selection of speakers for both the Debate and the Symposium was consistent with the ethical principles, obligations, and standards outlined in the University's Academic Freedom Policy.
- 12.41 In particular, Professor Watego, in consultation with academic staff from the Carumba Institute, undertook reasonable and proper process in selecting panellists for the Debate and the Symposium. The rationale for speaker selection for the Debate – focusing on individuals who had lived experience of being negatively racialised, who had experience in public discourse on race and racism, and who had personally experienced the dismissal of their accounts of racism – was reasonable and aligned with the purpose of the event.
- 12.42 An academic member of the Carumba Institute, at the direction of Professor Watego, extended an invitation to all members of the Centre of Excellence to speak at the Symposium. Many of the speakers at the Symposium were ultimately, in accordance with the original intent, drawn from individuals and groups identified in the CEER application. This reflects a coherent alignment with the event's objectives.
- 12.43 These approaches to the selection of speakers were not contrary to the Academic Freedom Policy; they represent a legitimate and inclusive approach to curating the event.
- 12.44 The content of the Debate and the Symposium (properly seen in context) was in accord with the principles of academic intellectual freedom and freedom of speech as detailed in the Academic Freedom Policy.
- 12.45 Both events provided a forum for staff and invited speakers to engage in intellectual inquiry, express their opinions and beliefs, and contribute to public debate on the subject of racism – an issue directly relevant to their academic work and lived experience.
- 12.46 While some content may have been provocative or confronting, it fell within the bounds of lawful expression and was not unsuitable for its intended audience. Some of this content reflected the kind of robust discourse that freedom is designed to protect.
- 12.47 However, as previously mentioned, there was no proper and adequate consideration given to the content of the presentations at the Debate prior to the event being held. Under the Freedom of Speech Policy (Principle 6) the University is to determine the terms and conditions in which visiting speakers may speak. In doing so, the University may request information, and refuse permission to speak if, for example, the proposed content of a speech is **or is likely** to be unlawful, or prejudice the fulfillment by the University of its duty to foster the wellbeing of staff and students. The University staff could not carry out their responsibilities to make this assessment when they had not made proper or adequate enquiries as to the content of the presentations at the Debate, more particularly the nature of the slides.
- 12.48 Finally, as to the content of the Academic Freedom Policy, it is fit for purpose and no recommendation is made relating to changes to the Academic Freedom Policy.
- 12.49 However, Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide future guidance regarding public events, the implementation of University policies and the training of staff and academics.

Compliance with other University policies

Did the University's organisation of the Debate and Symposium comply with the following University policies:

- (a) MOPP – Social Media Policy;
- (b) MOPP – Information Privacy Policy;
- (c) MOPP – Booking of University Space Policy; and
- (d) MOPP – VIP Visits Policy.

12.50 The Review is satisfied that the organisation of the Debate and the Symposium complied with the:

- (a) MOPP – Social Media Policy;
- (b) MOPP – Information Privacy Policy; and
- (c) MOPP – Booking of University Space Policy.

12.51 However, members of the Carumba Institute did not comply with all relevant requirements of the VIP Visits Policy.

12.52 Specifically, section 5(6) of the VIP Visits Policy requires that VIP visits must be hosted and managed in accordance with the Organising VIP Visitors Procedure.

12.53 As mentioned earlier in the Review, the Organising VIP Visitors Procedure requires that the staff hosting the VIP:

- (a) receive approval to host from the head of their organisational area. It is unclear whether formal approval was obtained or whether the head of the organisational area was just notified of Senator Thorpe's attendance;
- (b) complete a VIP Risk Assessment form and receive risk assessment approval from the Manager, Facilities Services; and
- (c) complete the Notice of VIP Visit form at least 10 working days prior to the visit and communicate changes to the relevant stakeholders.

12.54 The VIP Visits Policy applies to the hosting of VIP's at a "*QUT campus or event*" and Senator Thorpe is classified as a VIP under the relevant definition.

12.55 Specifically, the following elements of the Organising VIP Visitors Procedure were not complied with in relation to Senator Thorpe's attendance:

- (a) if staff were uncertain regarding whether Senator Thorpe (or her attendance at the Symposium) met the definition of a VIP under the VIP Visits Policy, the decision-maker is empowered to adjudicate that decision. No such request was made to the relevant decision-maker and an incorrect assessment has been made that the VIP Visits Policy did not apply. This was not identified by any staff;
- (b) a VIP Risk Assessment Form specific to the hosting of the VIP, Senator Thorpe, was not prepared; and
- (c) a Notice of VIP Visit was not sent to the OVCP, the Manager (Facilities Services), Manager (Security and Emergency Management), and any

relevant organisational areas. While VIP hosts are not required to receive approval from the OVCP, they must provide the notice.

- 12.56 Based on the documents provided to the Review, it is clear that it was incorrectly assessed that the VIP Visits Policy did not apply to the Symposium, as the event was being held off-campus. As such, this policy and the associated procedure were not appropriately followed.
- 12.57 On this basis, it can be concluded that the VIP Visits Policy and Organising VIP Visitors Procedure were not appropriately complied with by staff.

Did the University's organisation of, the University's selection of presenters for, and content of the Debate and Symposium comply with the MOPP – Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism Policy?

- 12.58 As is apparent from the views outlined by the Review as to the selection of presenters for and content of the Debate and Symposium, these matters each aligned with the Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism Policy.

Does the University need to review any of the above policies and if yes, are there any recommended changes to these policies?

- 12.59 The content of these policies is fit for purpose and no recommendation is made relating to changes to the policies.
- 12.60 However, Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide future guidance regarding public events, the implementation of these policies and the training of staff and academics.

Evaluation of complaints and correspondence

Were the complaints received by the University in relation to the presentations at the Debate and Symposium reasonable, in the context of your factual findings and the material presented at the Debate and Symposium?

- 12.61 As mentioned already, the majority of individuals or organisations who submitted complaints about the Debate were not in attendance at either the Debate or the Symposium and based their complaints on the media reports.
- 12.62 While physical presence is not a prerequisite for expressing concern (or support) – particularly when the subject matter touches on deeply personal or communal identities – it does influence whether there was a proper basis for the complaint where there was no direct engagement with the full context and nuance of the presentations, particularly in the atmosphere of the Debate. This is particularly pertinent in relation to Ms Schwartz's presentation.
- 12.63 The Review has already addressed and considered the range of concerns received by the University, necessarily by reference to established facts relating to the events and the content of the material presented at the events.

Does the University need to review any relevant policies, not already identified in response to the above questions, in light of these complaints and, if yes, are there any recommended changes to those policies?

- 12.64 The University does not need to review the content of any of the relevant policies in light of the complaints and no recommendation is made relating to changes to the relevant policies.
- 12.65 However, Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide future guidance regarding public events, the implementation of University policies and the training of staff and academics.

Parliamentary Joint Committee

- 12.66 As a separate matter, the Review has been tasked to identify and record any findings and observations potentially relevant to the Antisemitism Inquiry. Specifically, Chair of the Antisemitism Inquiry, Mr Josh Burns MP, stated:

"...As part of the review, Vice-Chancellor, can I make a request? Professor Watego wrote a recent piece which I think goes to an examination of the appropriateness of holding anti-racism symposiums. The professor wrote, in reference to a Human Rights Commission report, 'To properly understand how racism is working, reports like this must go beyond collating individual feelings and experiences as though all perspectives are equal.' That's the first bit. I'm skipping a paragraph and going to the third paragraph, that I've got in front of me, which says, 'Who has access to state militaries, land, weapons, media, political influence, government support, international recognition and money?' I would urge that the review include those comments by the professor because, to me, they sound very eerily like the sorts of tropes that are directed towards Jewish people. I believe it would be appropriate for the review to consider those remarks and any other remarks that the professor has made, in order to be confident that this professor is not, in any way, in any platform, putting forward any views that could be misconstrued or could be aligned with what we would consider antisemitism'."

- 12.67 Professor Sheil AO agreed this request.

- 12.68 The Review is intended by the University to be made public, and will presumably be available to the Antisemitism Inquiry. All of the findings and observations in the Review will potentially be relevant to the Antisemitism Inquiry.

January 2025 article

- 12.69 The article referred to by Mr Burns MP was published on The Conversation on 16 January 2025. The article, titled *"The Human Rights Commission has handed down a report on racism at Australian universities. Here's why it fails"* was co-authored by Professor Watego, amongst others including fellow staff of the Carumba Institute and Dr Strakosch of the University of Melbourne. The article provides (emphasis added):

"...To properly understand how racism is working, reports like this must go beyond collating individual feelings and experiences as though all

perspectives are equal, and examine the institutions and political systems that distribute racial violence and racist harm.

We must ask who is being displaced and structurally excluded? Who's being incarcerated, dehumanised and overpoliced? Who commands sympathies, whilst others do not? Who's being pushed out of employment, framed as violent and denied sovereignty? Who's being killed?

Who has access to state militaries, land, weapons, media, political influence, government support, international recognition and money?

In avoiding an understanding of racism in a structural sense, anti-racism efforts wherever they are situated become useless, or worse – violent."

Working definition of antisemitism

12.70 As mentioned already in the Review, there is ongoing disagreement, at a societal level, regarding the meaning of antisemitism, with differing views on which definition should be applied or adopted as the standard in assessing conduct. These debates often reflect broader tensions around free speech, historical context, and the boundaries of criticism.

12.71 In relation to freedom of speech or academic intellectual freedom, any definition of antisemitism that is adopted cannot displace existing legal standards or laws. However, the use of a definition (whatever it is) is to inform decisions made by University administrators about the confines of freedom of expression within the context and framework of the University itself. Applying any definition of antisemitism will necessarily involve a fact driven and context-dependent analysis, often nuanced.

12.72 Recommendation 6 addresses this issue and the need for the University to adopt a definition of antisemitism.

12.73 It should be noted that there are some in the Jewish community who resist any use of definitions and guidelines as leading to inappropriate restrictions of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom, or even as a way to prevent legitimate criticism.

12.74 The Antisemitism Inquiry's report, published in February 2025, made 9 recommendations for Australian universities. Recommendation 2 provides relevantly:

"The committee recommends that Australian universities should ... [adopt] a clear definition of antisemitism that aligns closely with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition ..."

12.75 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (**IHRA**) working definition of antisemitism includes some, but not all, expressions of anti-Zionism as examples of antisemitism. The IHRA was formed in 1998 and currently comprises 35 national governments, including Australia.

12.76 Following discussions amongst almost 300 experts and policymakers from member countries, the IHRA definition of antisemitism resolution was adopted at its Bucharest annual meeting on 26 May 2016. The definition reads:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed

toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

12.77 The definition sets out examples that include vilifications of Israel. The resolution goes on to say that:

"... to guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations: Manifestations might include the targeting of the State of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic... Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life ... could ... include..."

- (a) *Accusing Jewish citizens are being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations...*
- (b) *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a state of Israel is a racist endeavour.*
- (c) *Applying double standards by requiring behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.*
- (d) *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.*
- (e) *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*
- (f) *Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel."*

12.78 The Canadian Handbook on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism provides a list of 11 illustrative examples of common contemporary forms of antisemitism (in accordance with the IHRA definition of antisemitism). Example 2 from the list provides that antisemitism includes:

"Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective – such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions."

12.79 There is an advantage in having examples as a guide to help people understand what the definition of adopted means and provide non-prescriptive guidance on efforts to address antisemitism.

12.80 A definition was developed in collaboration with Universities Australia (UA) and Ms Jillian Segal AO, the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism. The definition unanimously endorsed by UA members is:

"Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, harassment, exclusion, vilification, intimidation or violence that impedes Jews' ability to participate as equals in educational, political, religious, cultural, economic or social life. It can manifest in a range of ways including negative, dehumanising, or stereotypical narratives about Jews. Further, it includes hate speech, epithets, caricatures, stereotypes, tropes, Holocaust denial, and antisemitic symbols."

Targeting Jews based on their Jewish identities alone is discriminatory and antisemitic.

Criticism of the policies and practices of the Israeli government or state is not in and of itself antisemitic. However, criticism of Israel can be antisemitic when it is grounded in harmful tropes, stereotypes or assumptions and when it calls for the elimination of the State of Israel or all Jews or when it holds Jewish individuals or communities responsible for Israel's actions. It can be antisemitic to make assumptions about what Jewish individuals think based only on the fact that they are Jewish.

All peoples, including Jews, have the right to self-determination. For most, but not all Jewish Australians, Zionism is a core part of their Jewish identity. Substituting the word "Zionist" for "Jew" does not eliminate the possibility of speech being antisemitic."

Adoption of a working definition of antisemitism

- 12.81 Prior to the Review, the University had not adopted the IHRC definition of antisemitism, or any specific definition of antisemitism.
- 12.82 The comments in the January 2025 article above could apply to a number of groups in the examination of institutions and political systems as distinct from individual feelings and experiences. A message in the January 2025 article was that racism (generally) needed to be addressed and understood at a structural level.

Nevertheless, the emphasised sentence comes within Example 2 of the list provided in the Canadian Handbook on the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and the definition unanimously endorsed by UA members.

13. Future course

- 13.1 The University has already undertaken a number of management initiatives following the Debate and Symposium. The commissioning of the Review is just part of this process. The University has indicated it will make public the Review and implement the recommendations made in the Review.
- 13.2 The University's policies and procedures themselves are not dense documents or difficult to read or understand. The scope and intent of the policies and procedures is clear. All policies and procedures of universities need to be reviewed regularly, including complaints procedures, to ensure they remain fit for purpose and up to date. This is a process the University will continue. The real challenge is in their enforcement. Different views as to the scope of the proper restrictions to place on freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom make the task more difficult.
- 13.3 The Review has concentrated on some Council and management responsibilities that should be undertaken to eliminate or minimise the issues that have given rise to the commissioning of the Review, particularly in respect of the Carumba Institute. Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 deal with these issues.
- 13.4 The scope of the University to use internal reactive processes to deal with any misconduct only concern the staff and students at the University. The Review has

necessarily considered the content of the Debate and the Symposium, where there were many individual speakers who are neither staff nor students.

- 13.5 The accompanying Confidential Review Report, in conjunction with the Review, will be considered by the University specifically in relation to certain individual staff members of the University.
- 13.6 The Vice-Chancellor and President of the University has already, in a timely fashion, apologised for the hurt caused as a result of what was displayed and said at the Debate and Symposium. This apology was made in respect of the events mainly surrounding the Debate – not only arising from the media coverage but arising from her discussions with various individuals including staff members. Professor Sheil was apologising on behalf of the University for any offence that may have been caused irrespective of any judgement on content or context.
- 13.7 Engaging in civility has already been recognised by the University as a way students and staff should behave. For example, there is the Spiritual Support and Inclusion Action Plan. The principles are relatively clear – treat others with respect, support freedom of speech for others, disagree well and be considerate in what is expressed or done. The real difficulty for any university is to enforce the need for civility and respect in the current environment, where there is passion and emotion arising out of the events occurring in the Middle East. However, this makes it all the more important to stress the need for civility and respect, and enforce compliance.

14. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- 14.1 The Council of the University should:
- (a) consider and define the role and function and the leadership of the Carumba Institute going forward in the future focusing on the original purpose of its establishment; and
 - (b) consider and define the supervisory control the Council and the Vice-Chancellor and President should have over the Carumba Institute, including a requirement for the Carumba Institute to report to the Council and Vice-Chancellor and President regarding public events.

Recommendation 2

- 14.2 The Council of the University should consider making it mandatory in respect of public events on land controlled by the University, or where the event is organised or supervised by the University, that an appropriate group of personnel be adequately informed prior to the public event of the identification of persons invited to speak or participate and an indication of the topic to be discussed and any material they may display. Then the information so gathered should be properly analysed to assess whether the topic and the material is appropriate, taking into account not only freedom of expression and academic

intellectual freedom, but also providing a safe, respectful and inclusive university environment.

Recommendation 3

- 14.3 The Council of the University should, in relation to the implementation of the policies relating to the expression of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom, emphasise:
- (a) the proper restrictions that are placed on the expression of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom; and
 - (b) the importance of being civil, respectful and inclusive and the protection of the wellbeing of all staff, students and visitors to the University.

Recommendation 4

- 14.4 The Council of the University should adopt a standard for itself, and for the purposes of providing guidance to all academics, staff and visitors to the University, on the balancing of freedom of speech and academic intellectual freedom with the appropriate and lawful restrictions to prevent inappropriate speech or actions. Consideration should be given to the guidance outlined by the Rabat Plan developed by the United Nations in assessing that balance to take into account:

"...the social and political context of the speech; the status of the speaker; intent (as opposed to recklessness or negligence) as to whether the speech incites the audience against a target group; the content and form of the speech (including the degree to which the speech was provocative or direct, and having regard to whether the speech was public, the size of the audience and means of its dissemination); and the likelihood of harm, including imminence."

Recommendation 5

- 14.5 The management of the University should conduct regular training programs for all staff and academics to familiarise the staff and academics with the policies of the University and the importance of their implementation, with particular focus on the current risk of racist and antisemitic behaviour.

Recommendation 6

- 14.6 The Council of the University should adopt and publish a definition of antisemitism for the purposes of informing the students, staff, academics and visitors to the University and so as to inform University administrators to enable them to properly prevent and sanction inappropriate behaviour.



The Honourable John E Middleton AM KC

16 June 2025