Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom
Attestation Statement 2021

The ANU has a policy that upholds freedom of speech and academic freedom as paramount values, as required under the French Model Code. The ANU maintains an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected. The ANU addresses questions in relation to the management of academic freedom and freedom of speech issues promptly, actively, and in good faith.

In February 2021, the ANU Academic Board reviewed the recommendations from the Walker Review to assess where the University’s response could more stringently adhere to the principles of the French Model Code, and to develop a plan to bring ANU into alignment. The ANU Chancellor, the Hon Julie Bishop, addressed the Academic Board at its retreat on 30 April 2021 and acknowledged the central role of academic freedom in the history, ongoing work, and future of the ANU. The Board recommended the following program work be pursued during 2021:

1. Consolidate the existing, yet separate ANU statements on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression into a single policy, in alignment with the recommendations of the Walker Review.

   **Outcome:** The Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy was approved by the ANU Council on 28 May 2021.

2. Further review the existing policy suite to identify gaps and resolve any potential incompatibilities.

   **Outcome:** Following continued policy review work conducted by the University, the Department of Education confirmed on 23 June 2021 in correspondence received by the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor that the University’s policies were now ‘fully aligned’ to the Model Code.

3. Explore initiatives to alert and enlighten staff and students on the role of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

   **Outcome:** In October and November 2021 the Chair of Academic Board facilitated a series of consultation sessions with Deans and College Executive members of each of the ANU Colleges, the Dean of Students, the Dean of Staff, and representatives of the ANU students’ association (ANUSA) and postgraduate and research students’ association (PARSA) to discuss current and emerging academic freedom concerns relative to ANU. These consultations provided:

   - Important feedback about the new Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech policy; and
• Academic Board with a baseline summary of the issues that may amount to a risk to academic freedom. The Board will prioritise these issues to assist in the University’s responses and actions, and monitor them accordingly.

The results of this consultation will be presented to Academic Board at its first meeting on 15 March 2022 and inform continuing work over 2022.

Managing freedom of speech and academic freedom in 2021

The ANU routinely receives a small number of freedom of speech and academic freedom oriented complaints via existing ANU channels including the Deans of Staff and Students. All formal complaints in 2021 were addressed in accordance with the University’s Staff and Student Grievance Resolution Policies and Procedures and with reference to the Staff and Student Codes of Conduct. From 2022 the University will compile a list of all formal complaints concerning issues of freedom of speech and academic freedom.

In 2021, academic freedom was specifically articulated as a fundamental value upon which the ANU2025 strategic plan is founded. Throughout the year, the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, and senior leaders at the University have publicly expressed the central value of academic freedom in ANU-wide forums and in the national and international press.

In July 2021, a matter was reported in media outlets that a student association had 'disinvited' specific groups to market day on ANU campus. ANU initiated an independent investigation of this claim and found that this had not happened. No group was disinvited and no violation of academic freedom or freedom of speech had occurred. This provided another valuable opportunity to raise awareness about academic freedom and freedom of speech on campus.

Further, a campus-wide open forum with invited international guests will be held in 2022 to further raise awareness about a value fundamental to being a member of the ANU community.

Authorised by the ANU Council
8 April 2022