



Why We Shouldn't #ChangeTheDate

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Last Friday, the University of Western Australia Student Guild voted overwhelmingly in favour of changing the date of Australia Day and proposed to ban all future campus celebrations on January 26.

Just hours before the general meeting was to set to begin, the Western Australian Students Aboriginal Corporation (WASAC) had requested that the motion to join the #ChangeTheDate campaign be raised and discussed at the Guild Council meeting.

Even though the official submission date had closed the week earlier, the Guild allowed WASAC to put forward the motion that 'Australia day should be moved to a more inclusive day' because January 26 'is the day of dispossession of Indigenous culture and is a commemoration of deep loss.'

Just one ordinary Guild councillor spoke out against the motion, while another chose to abstain from the vote. And when that lone voice of disagreement pointed out that Australia Day is one



of 'inclusivity and gratitude' and that 'many Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are against changing the date', several fellow councillors literally shouted him down with cries of 'shame!'

The Guild's ice president stated that 'celebrating Australia Day means that you are celebrating genocide', implying that because the councillor chose to observe January 26 as a National Holiday, he was an enthusiast of mass slaughter and indiscriminate killing.

The education president also joined the verbal assault, responding to the councillor's logical and reasoned remarks by announcing that she was 'sick of white males who make a comment on race issues they will never be able to understand.'

In her view, both the councillor's gender (male) and colour (white) permanently disqualified him from arguing about changing the date of Australia Day because by default, he was a racist.

The exchange is a text book example of identity politics at work, where the victim culture of safe spaces, trigger warnings and macroaggressions employs emotional reasoning as its core tactic. This is a world in which the left is devoted to shutting down free speech and ridding the world of rational discussion.

In his article *The Coddling of the American Minds*, Jonathan Haidt, professor of ethical leadership at New York University, exposes how destructive identity politics actually is to the individual and to society, where feelings guide reality and emotional reasoning has become evidence.

While universities in the US have long been the bastion of this 'victimhood' culture, this latest episode reveals that Australian minds are not only being coddled but also, fried, poached and scrambled, courtesy of our institutions of higher learning,

The University of Western Australia's student Guild's decision to vote in favour of WASAC's motion to join the #ChangetheDate campaign shows beyond a doubt that the left's pernicious philosophy of identity politics has well and truly infiltrated our universities. Freedom of speech on campus is seriously under threat in Australian universities.

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