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## PROFESSOR PETER RIDD STANDING UP FOR SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AGAINST JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

James Cook University is threatening scientific integrity by seeking to censor one of its academic staff members, Professor Peter Ridd, according to John Roskam, the Executive Director of the Institute of Public Affairs.

"The university should not be attempting to silence the scientific debate about the impact of climate change. Professor Ridd is a world expert on the Great Barrier Reef - he has the right and responsibility to interrogate the research evidence which determines how more than a billion dollars of taxpayer's money will be spent," Mr Roskam said.

In August last year Professor Ridd was interviewed by Alan Jones on Sky News about his chapter in a book *Climate Change: The Facts 2017* published by the Institute of Public Affairs. In his chapter, *The Extraordinary Resilience of Great Barrier Reef Corals, and Problems with Policy Science*, Professor Ridd wrote:

Policy science concerning the Great Barrier Reef is almost never checked. Over the next few years, Australian government will spend more than a billion dollars on the Great Barrier Reef; the costs to industry could far exceed this. Yet the keystone research papers have not been subject to proper scrutiny. Instead, there is a total reliance on the demonstrably inadequate peer review process.

Professor Ridd said on Sky News:

The basic problem is that we can no longer trust the scientific organisations like the Australian Institute of Marine Science, even things like the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies - a lot of this is stuff is coming out, the science is coming out not properly checked, tested or replicated and this is a great shame because we really need to be able to trust our scientific institutions and the fact is I do not think we can any more...

...I think that most of the scientists who are pushing out this stuff they genuinely believe that there are problems with the reef, I just don't think they're very objective about the science they do, I think they're emotionally attached to their subject and you know you can't blame them, the reef is a beautiful thing.

JCU claimed that Professor Ridd's comments denigrated the university and the university directed him to make no future such comments.

"The actions of James Cook University (JCU) follow a now-familiar pattern of behaviour by Australia's universities. The search for truth has been replaced by unquestioning allegiance to consensus, group-think, and orthodoxy. The treatment of Professor Ridd by JCU is no different to what the University of Western Australia did to Bjorn Lomborg in 2015," said Mr Roskam.

IPA research has found a worsening state of free speech on Australia's university campuses. The IPA's *Free Speech on Campus Audit 2017* found 34 of Australia's 42 universities are hostile to free speech on campus through their actions and policies.

'We will enter a new dark age of unreason if universities are afraid of debate,' said Mr Roskam.

Professor Ridd has [launched a GoFundMe to fundraise](#) the legal costs for action against James Cook University to protect his academic freedom to discuss integrity in science.

The IPA's *Climate Change: The Facts 2017* sold out its first three printings, and has sold nearly 10,000 copies. The book can be [purchased from Connor Court Publishing](#).

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