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## **JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY MUST GIVE UP ITS APPEAL IN THE RIDD FREE SPEECH CASE**

Free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs has today called on James Cook University to immediately rule out an appeal by the University of the decision of the Federal Circuit Court in the Dr Peter Ridd court case on freedom of speech on climate change.

It was revealed in hearings today in the Federal Circuit Court in Brisbane that the University "currently intends to exercise its right of appeal against his Honour's decision."

The details of a freedom of information request lodged by the Institute of Public Affairs with James Cook University and released today reveal the University has already spent at least \$630,000 on legal fees in the Dr Peter Ridd case.

"The very fact that an Australian university is willing to force the weight of an entire administration backed by taxpayer funds to stifle an academic's freedom of speech sends a massive chilling effect to any academic engaging in public debate in Australia," said IPA Director of Policy, Gideon Rozner.

"James Cook University's shameful actions prove without doubt there is a crisis of free speech at Australian Universities.

"It is staggering to think that after the Federal Circuit Court ruled on every point in Dr Ridd's favour, JCU is contemplating an appeal.

"Australian universities receive billions of dollars in taxpayer funding for the purpose of free intellectual inquiry. Now JCU wants to go to a higher court to prove it can shut down the freedom of speech on academic issue by one of its professors. It is outrageous. Taxpayers fund JCU to do education and research, not engage in vexatious litigation against its own staff.

"It is time for JCU's council to step in to restore sanity, and save the university from spending millions of taxpayer dollars to exert control over a fine and sincere 30-year employee.

"If not, Education Minister Dan Tehan must intervene and tell JCU to withdraw its appeal because it is an inappropriate expenditure of taxpayer funds and will do irreparable harm to the international reputation of Australia's higher education sector," Mr Rozner said.

**For media and comment: Evan Mulholland, Director of Communications, on 0405 140 780, or at [emulholland@ipa.org.au](mailto:emulholland@ipa.org.au)**

**Legal fees paid by JCU in responding to the Peter Ridd litigation**

	Amount (excluding GST)
1 Clayton Utz professional fees	\$495,211.40
2 Counsel's fees	\$134,708.18
3 Total	\$629,919.58

