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THE PROCESS IS THE PUNISHMENT FOR QUT STUDENTS

“The Turnbull government cannot stick its head in the sand any longer on section 18C: the law must be repealed,” said John Roskam, Executive Director at free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

“The proof that the human rights regime is damaged beyond repair is now plain for all to see,” said Mr Roskam. “The federal government must announce an independent parliamentary inquiry into the Australian Human Rights Commission, and Gillian Triggs must now step down as the President of the Human Rights Commission.”

A complaint made in May 2014 under section 18C originally against seven Queensland University of Technology students was dismissed by the Federal Circuit Court today, finally ending a long-running legal saga.

“It is a tragedy that this case ever reached the courts,” said Mr Roskam. “Regardless of how it was decided, the process has been the punishment.”

The complaint arose from an incident in May 2013, after QUT student Alex Wood was ejected from an indigenous-only computer room at QUT’s Gardens Point campus. Wood posted on an unofficial student Facebook page: “Just got kicked out of the unsigned Indigenous computer room. QUT stopping segregation with segregation...?”

“The students involved in this case have lost over three years of their lives to a legal process that is fundamentally flawed.”

“Alex Wood, Calum Thwaites and Jackson Powell and the other students were not told for 14 months that a complaint had been made against them. This is just one of the gross failures from the Human Rights Commission in this case.”

“How this prolonged saga over online banter has played out calls into doubt the ability of the Commission to properly and fairly execute its role.”

“An independent parliamentary inquiry into the Commission would introduce much needed accountability of the Commission. For its failures in this case however, Professor Triggs should take responsibility and immediately stand down,” said Mr Roskam.

The IPA’s video on the QUT case “How 18C is corrupting our legal rights” can be viewed [here](#).

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