

Ridd's disagreement with JCU: Some background.

Summary:

- Science is in the midst of a “Replication Crisis” in which high powered replication studies are finding flaws in around 50% of recently published important research.
- Ridd believes that much of the science claiming damage to the GBR has serious flaws, and that there is insufficient Quality Control (QC) of the science for the public to have confidence in its scientific institutions.
- Ridd believes that peer review is insufficient QC upon which to make decisions on the GBR worth billions of dollars and made a comment on Sky TV that work of some important institutions was unreliable because of the reliance on peer review.
- For this statement JCU alleged serious misconduct against Ridd, for which a possible penalty is dismissal.
- Ridd was offered legal assistance by the Institute of Public Affairs to fight these allegations because of the clear freedom of speech and academic freedom implications of the case.
- JCU used its surveillance powers to read all of Ridd's email correspondence and used information gained to allege 25 new misconduct allegations – mostly because Ridd refused to be silent about the existence of JCU's allegations. Even emails to his wife were deemed to be further misconduct.
- Ridd launched legal action in court.
- JCU found Ridd to be guilty of serious misconduct and given a “final censure”. He has also been told to remain silent about the matter.
- Ridd has also had his public lecture presentations vetted by JCU, and been given instruction not to say certain comments or use particular powerpoint slides.
- Ridd feels that his ability to do his job as an academic has been severely compromised and will continue with legal action to draw attention to the quality assurance problems in science and the obligation of universities in general to genuinely foster debate, argument and the clash of ideas