

Dear Sir,

The Muslim Community in Queensland is appalled by the biased and prejudiced reporting of The Australian, particularly Kerbaj's articles of April 22 and 23 in respect of a \$100,000 donation by the Saudi embassy to Griffith University's Islamic Research Unit. GIRU's work is fully supported by the Muslim Community as it is addressing issues and seeking solutions to enable the smooth integration of Muslims into Australian society. Its programs form a significant component of the Government's National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security. Specific research is being conducted on the peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, prevention of domestic violence, and ethics in Islamic finance. A repercussion of your unjust reporting could be increasing Islamophobia and the consequent decline in thousands of foreign Muslims coming not only to study but also to experience our way of life and norms. These tend to be future leaders of their societies and what better way to influence their home countries than to learn from us.

The Australian's journalistic standards have demonstrably sunk to a new low when a journalist and its editor can imply that GIRU and the Griffith University have been taken over by a foreign power when a small donation is provided without strings attached. As clarified by Prof. Ian O'Connor (Opinion, 24/4), such funds for Islamic educational institutions in the West are often provided by Muslim benefactors and governments as a normal source of support. What is Kerbaj's message...that the Australian government or taxpayers should provide the funds instead? Do you or other detractors like judge Clive Wall question the large sums given by Christian, Jewish or Chinese organizations and communities to Australian Universities? We never read in The Australian of Jewish extremism when Jewish institutions donate. Of major concern to Australian citizens now is the foreign control of The Australian itself and allied media and its impact on our sovereignty, which deserves heightened attention.

The Australian's poor editorial competence is equally demonstrated by broadcasting slanders by Clive Wall, who provided not a shred of evidence for his statements such as Griffith Uni has become 'an agent of extreme Islam'. We call for national defamation laws to be strengthened when such comment can be so casually reported by a national paper to tarnish the good name of a respected institution.

The Australian should upgrade its standards since it was recently reprimanded by the Australian Press Council for exaggerated negative reporting of a Muslim institution. We call upon The Australian to show it is truly Australian by balanced reporting conducive to building social capital among all Australians.

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