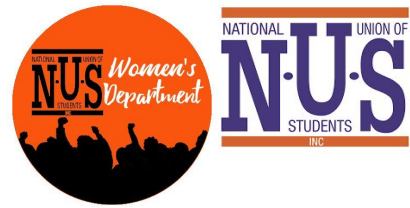


The Hon Shane Stone AC QC  
Chairman of the Council of the Order of Australia  
The Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat  
Government House  
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Mr Stone,

**Request to revoke Ms Bettina Arndt's award as a Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division.**

We write to you on behalf of the National Union of Students and numerous University Student Unions across Australia, requesting the cancellation of Ms Bettina Arndt's title as a Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division.

Ms Arndt was awarded the Order of Australia for her contribution to 'gender equity' but the views she has promoted in recent years, do not advance that goal. We believe that the actions and comments made by Ms Bettina Arndt have dishonoured the values that are upheld by the Order and bring the Order into disrepute.

Ms Arndt on 21 February 2020, made the following tweet in relation murder to the of Ms Hannah Carke and her three children; Aaliyah, Laianah and Trey.

"Congratulations to the Queensland police for keeping an open mind and awaiting proper evidence, including the possibility that Rowan Baxter might have been 'driven too far.' But not the misplaced outrage. How dare police deviate from the feminist script of seeking excuses... and explanations when women stab their partners to death, or drive their children into dams but immediately judging a man in these circumstances as simply representing the evil violence that is in all men."

The notion that Rowan Baxter was "driven too far" as an excuse for domestic violence that resulted in the murder of Ms Hannah Clarke and her three children is heinous. If Ms Arndt continues to hold the award of the Order of Australia, it suggests that the Order not only approves her messaging but endorses it. This is a direct insult to not only to the memory of Ms Hannah Clarke and her children, but to the memory of all individuals that have lost their lives to domestic and family violence.

We also note that this is not the first time that Ms Arndt has acted disrespectfully towards victims of gender-based violence. In 2017, Ms Arndt released a 17-minute video where she sympathetically interviewed twice-convicted paedophile Nicolaas Bester. Mr Bester groomed and repeatedly raped a 15-year old schoolgirl, Grace Tame, while he was her 58-year-old maths

teacher. He then bragged online about the multiple rapes that he had committed, describing them as “awesome” and claimed that other men “envy” him.

Later, Ms Arndt made comments regarding Mr Bester stating that, “He is not a pederast. He is not preying on kids”. She also claimed that, “Male teachers are really vulnerable. And girls can be very seductive.”

Prior to this, in 2005, Arndt wrote a news article for the Courier Mail where she described convicted paedophile and former Scout Master, Robert Potter, as a “good bloke”. In the same article Ms Arndt also lamented the “moral panic over paedophilia”, saying “such minor abuse rarely has lasting consequences”. One of Potter’s victims later attempted suicide.

Earlier still, in 1997, Ms Arndt also defended a Canberra doctor who had molested multiple patients, including a 12-year-old child, arguing that the sex offender should not be charged over the molestations, because in another context molesting a person would be a “loving and pleasurable” act.

We are conscious that victim-blaming attitudes, and attitudes which minimise or excuse sexual and domestic violence, create significant barriers to those seeking help and assistance. Such attitudes also normalise violence and this, in turn, can exacerbate the risk to the community.

We know that our Government and judicial systems still have a long way to go in addressing these issues. However, the standard we walk by is the standard we accept. Rewarding someone who contributes to a toxic victim-blaming culture is disgraceful.

We also note that listed among Ms Arndt’s Order of Australia achievements is her ‘2018 campus tour’- more colloquially known as her ‘fake rape campus tour’. As student leaders, we are highly concerned that this ‘tour’ has been listed as an ‘achievement’. During this tour Ms Arndt has minimised sexual assault referring to it as ‘regret sex’, while advising students that ‘no doesn’t always mean no’ in relation to sexual consent. These views are out of step with acceptable values and place students at increased risk.

Further, we are conscious that throughout this campus speaking tour, Ms Arndt has wrongfully and illegally described herself as a “psychologist” including on flyers for this tour. This is in breach of the National Law, which makes it a crime for an unregistered individual to use a protected title - including the title ‘psychologist’. As students, we are taught to value and respect academic integrity and the use of qualifications and titles. It is unacceptable that, despite having never been registered as one, Ms Arndt has illegally adopted and exploited the title of ‘psychologist’ for more than thirty years, and that this falsehood has been promulgated in the media, at medical conferences, on the back of her 2009 book, and during Senate estimates. It is also unacceptable that Ms Arndt has unlawfully assumed this title during her campus speaking tour while discussing subjects as sensitive as sexual assault. It is equally disturbing that this

speaking tour has then been listed as an 'achievement' in official materials published to the public at the time of her being awarded the Order of Australia.

We request that you consider the cancellation of her award on the grounds of her comments and actions, in accordance with section 4(4) of the Termination and Cancellations Ordinance of the Constitution of the Order of Australia. This states that "the Governor-General may terminate an appointment, or cancel an award has behaved or acted in a manner that has brought disrepute on the order."

We support the motion passed by the Australian Federal Parliament requesting the termination of her appointment and understand that the Office of the Governor-General has referred the matter to the Council of the Order of Australia for advice.

Thank you, we look forward to your response.

Kind Regards,



**Humaira Nasrin** (National Union of Students' Women's Officer)

The following National Union of Students' Office Bearers and Student Union Presidents have signed onto this letter:



**Molly Willmott** (National Union of Students' President)



**Sam Roberts** (National Union of Students' National Secretary)



**Ali Amin** (National Union of Students' Welfare Officer)



**Samuel Silcock** (UTS Students' Association President)



**Lachlan Day** (ANU Students' Association President)



**Tiarnan Cleary** (Deakin University Student Association)

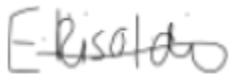


**Annabelle Romano** (La Trobe University Student Union President)





**Josh Rayner** (Student President, Flinders University Student Association)



**Emanuelle Risoldi** (President of University of New South Wales SRC)



**Paul Taylor** Griffith University SRC President (Nathan Campus)



**Henry Armfield** The University of Adelaide Student Representative Council President

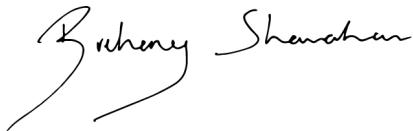


**Hana Arai** President, Curtin University Student Guild





**Will Penrose** (Victoria University Student Union President)

The logo for the Victoria University Student Union. It features the words "Victoria University" in a blue, handwritten-style script, with "STUDENT UNION" in a bold, blue, blocky sans-serif font underneath.

**Bre Shanahan** (UWA Student Guild President)



**Liam Donohoe** (President, University of Sydney Students' Representative Council)





**Daniel Hoogstra** (RMIT University Student Union President)



**Noah Beckmann** (University of South Australia Student Association President)



**Alec Hall** (Wollongong Undergraduate Student Association President)



**Param Mahal** (President, Swinburne Student Union)





**Connor Werhertt** (President of University of Sydney Union)



**Elsa Chew | President of the Edith Cowan University Student Guild**



**Hannah Buchan** (President of University of Melbourne Student Union)

