

SAMPLE LETTER

21 September 2026

Professor XXX
Vice-Chancellor
XX University

Dear Professor XXX

Inquiry into the NSW University Sector – Report tabled

I am pleased to advise that today the Standing Committee on Social Issues tabled its report, *New South Wales University Governance – Final report*. I attach a copy and thank you for your participation, and that of your institution, in the inquiry.

The report makes a total of 21 findings and 23 recommendations focused on improving the governance of universities established under New South Wales enabling Acts. The report and its recommendations are now with the government for consideration. The government is required to respond to the recommendations within three months. You will be advised of the government response when it has been received. I trust that you will find the recommendations constructive and valuable.

On behalf of the committee I take this opportunity to raise a matter of significant concern to the committee which emerged as the inquiry proceeded and which I addressed in a number of hearings. The committee has been deeply troubled by some inquiry participants' fear of reprisal, especially from Deans, Heads of School and other senior faculty staff, who as we note in our final chapter, are entrusted with enormous power over their colleagues.

Submission authors and witnesses acted with courage and good faith in stepping forward and expressing their views to the committee. Equally, we recognise that senior university representatives including yourself participated in the inquiry in good faith. As with all parliamentary inquiries, the report documented a range of views expressed by participants and which form the basis for the committee's conclusions and recommendations. The participants themselves have been identified in the report alongside their views, except where they gave evidence *in camera* or, in the case of some submission authors, where they requested their name be suppressed or the committee otherwise determined the submission should be de-identified.

Inquiries, and ultimately the committee system as a whole, depend on witnesses and other inquiry participants coming forward without fear or favour, free from interference. For this reason, committees and the House take very seriously any suggestion that an inquiry participant may be interfered with in respect of their evidence.

Paragraph 20 of the Legislative Council's *Procedural Fairness Resolution* provides:

Where a committee has reason to believe that a person has been improperly influenced in respect of the evidence they may give to a committee, or has been penalised, injured or threatened in respect of evidence given, the committee will take all reasonable steps to

ascertain the facts of the matter. If the committee is satisfied that such action may have occurred, the committee may report the matter to the Legislative Council.

I take this opportunity to underscore the statement which I gave at each of the recent hearings for this inquiry:

I also raise with concern that over the course of the inquiry to date, committee members have heard from a number of inquiry participants that they fear reprisals from senior leaders of universities because of their evidence to the committee. We have also heard that witnesses have been questioned by university leaders about their evidence.

I remind all observers of this inquiry, including senior university managers, to be very mindful of the actions they take and the discussions they have in respect of oral or written evidence given to this committee. Senior managers should also be mindful that even if they do not intend for their actions to be threatening, they may be perceived as such by inquiry participants, given the very sensitive context in which this inquiry is being conducted.

On behalf of the committee I request that you distribute this letter to your senior executives, and to the senior leaders in each of your faculties and schools, with an express reminder that they act with significant care and caution in respect of any person or group who participated in this inquiry.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

If you require any further information about this request, please contact Merrin Thompson, Committee Director,

Yours sincerely

Hon Dr Sarah Kaine MLC
Committee Chair