



## An open letter to the Australian Broadcasting Company: Survivors will not be silenced

25/01/2018

We are Women's Officers from campuses around Australia, and we represent and advocate on behalf of all women students in this country. We are writing to express our anger at the inclusion of Charles Waterstreet on the panel for the Q&A #MeToo special on February 15.

Inviting Charles Waterstreet to speak on this panel gives him a national platform to further downplay, excuse, or victim-blame his way out of the multiple allegations of sexual harassment against him reported on in recent months. This is not only an insult to the thousands of women who continue to stand up against sexual harassment and misconduct in the workplace, but a huge insult to the brave women who have come forward about Charles Waterstreet and his behaviour towards his employees.

The following allegations against Charles Waterstreet are deeply concerning:

Charles Waterstreet, during an interview, showed a 21 year old student a video of himself being masturbated by two people.

Charles Waterstreet gave a young woman, on her first day of work, an autographed book of nude photos and then continued to show her pornographic material, send her explicit emails and harass her throughout her employment.

Charles Waterstreet, during another interview, showed a young woman a sex toy and spoke about his obsession with producing ethical pornography and showed her explicit images.

Charles Waterstreet is an alleged sexual predator.

The #MeToo movement was created by Tarana Burke over 10 years ago as a way for survivors of sexual violence, particularly women of colour, to communicate support and solidarity with one another. Its motto, "empowerment through empathy", was created for this purpose. For the ABC, our national broadcaster, to then give a platform to an accused perpetrator of sexual violence on a panel specially designated to discussing the current #MeToo movement is nothing short of disgusting.

By giving Waterstreet a place on this panel, the ABC is silencing the voices of survivors in exchange for advancing the voice of perpetrators. You have violated what this very movement is trying to achieve, and you are using the experiences of survivors of sexual assault and harassment to cause controversy, create publicity and increase television ratings for the network's benefit.

You have the opportunity to remedy this by inviting the voices of survivors and advocates to appear on your panel. If there is anything to learn from this movement it is that women will not be silent on sexual harassment and assault. Women students and the community of survivors are calling on you to invite Nina Funnell onto your panel, to give survivors a voice and opportunity to challenge Charles Waterstreet. Nina is the journalist who investigated and subsequently exposed Waterstreet through a series of explosive articles. Nina is a tireless advocate for the voices and stories of survivors and is one of the most qualified to speak on the subject. In 2017, Nina won both the Walkley Our Watch Award and the United Nations Media Award for her reporting on university sexual assault. Nina is one of many advocates and survivors whose voice Q&A should be proud to host on this panel.

On behalf of the 807,293 women students we represent in Australia, we call on the ABC to make this right.

**Signed:**

Kate Crossin, National Women's Officer - National Union of Students  
Sharlene Leroy-Dyer, Womens Officer - Council of Australian Postgraduates Association  
Sadie Heckenberg, President - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Association  
Jessica Syed, Women's Officer- University of Sydney Students' Representative Council  
Madeline Ward, Women's Officer- University of Sydney Students' Representative Council  
Imogen Grant, President - University of Sydney Students' Representative Council  
Anna Hush, 2016 Women's Officer - University of Sydney Students' Representative Council  
Angela Griffin, Women's Officer - University of New South Wales  
Lana Miletich, Women's Officer - University of Technology, Sydney  
Jenna Schofield, Women's Officer - Newcastle University Student Association  
Maddison O'Gradey, Women's Officer - Macquarie University SRC  
Erin Bliss, President - Macquarie University Women's Collective  
Molly Willmott, Women's Officer - University of Melbourne Student Union  
Kareena Dhaliwal, Women's Officer - University of Melbourne Student Union  
Shruthi Menon, Women's Officer - Swinburne Student Union  
Saffire Grant, President - University of Tasmania's Women's Collective  
Laura Perkov, Women's Officer - The Australian National University  
Lydia Berhan, Women's Officer- Curtin University  
Megan Lee, President - The University of Western Australia Student Guild  
Roshni Kaila, Women's Officer - The University of Western Australia Student Guild  
Olivia Savvas, Women's Officer - University of Adelaide Students' Representative Council  
Grace Hensel, Women's Officer - Flinders University Student Association

(Letter written by Laura Perkov, Kate Crossin, Madeline Ward and Jessica Syed)