

Climate Scientist Launches GoFundMe Page in Response to University's Gag Order

A professor at an Australian university launched [a GoFundMe page](#) Wednesday, alleging that university officials did not act in good faith and infringed on his academic freedom by censoring him for comments he made on a national television program.

James Cook University professor Peter Ridd, a marine scientist, had appeared on Sky News in August to discuss [his book](#) on climate change. During the interview, he criticized prevailing methodology and expressed concerns about the vetting process of scientific research.

"The basic problem is that we can no longer trust the scientific organizations like [the Australian Institute for Marine Science](#), even things like the [ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies](#)," Ridd said in the interview. "A lot of the science is coming out not properly tested or replicated, and this is a great shame because we really need to be able to trust our scientific institutions and the fact is I do not think we can any more."

[UPDATE: Ridd was fired by James Cook University, [The Guardian reported on Monday](#)]

Ridd, who had [been censured in 2016](#) after fact-checking global warming claims, told Sky News that he believed many of the scientists in the field believed in their research but had lost objectivity because they had become "emotionally attached to their subject."

Following these comments, James Cook University issued a final censure against Ridd and a gag order. Ridd responded this week

by announcing he is taking the matter to federal court. He launched a GoFundMe page to help him cover the legal costs the matter will entail.

“These conditions, particularly their instruction to remain silent, is unacceptable. It flies in the face of my instinct for truth and honesty, and my academic freedom,” Ridd wrote. “My lawyers are confident. However even if we win and are awarded partial costs I will still face substantial financial burden for the case. I have put aside \$24,000 of my own money for the case, however this will not be enough. I do not expect a cent back. The money I am asking for is to fund the rest of action.”

Ridd continued: “We must use this case to support the principle that academics are free to speak their mind within their field of expertise without fear or favour.”

It appears that many people are taking the threat to academic freedom seriously. Ridd had accrued more than \$25,000 in the first 24 hours of his campaign.