



21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Professor Frank Bongiorno AM FRHistS FASSA FAHA  
President, Council for the Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences  
University of Melbourne  
Parkville, VIC 3010  
Australia  
[membership@chass.org.au](mailto:membership@chass.org.au)

Prof. Dr Patrick Cramer  
President, Max Planck Society  
[praesident@gv.mpg.de](mailto:praesident@gv.mpg.de)

cc. Prof. Dr Ursula Rao  
Director, Anthropology of Politics and Governance Department,  
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle  
[office.rao@eth.mpg.de](mailto:office.rao@eth.mpg.de)

Dear Professor Cramer,

The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia wishes to convey its great disappointment at the decision to dismiss our colleague, Professor Ghassan Hage.

As you know, Professor Hage is one of Australia's leading scholars as well as being a world-renowned anthropologist. He has an exemplary record of humane scholarship and anti-racism. Many of his colleagues in this country find particularly unreasonable the unsubstantiated insinuation of racism in your public statement.

We recognise that German academic culture and German law are different from Australia's and we respect that difference. But we cannot forbear from pointing to the grave threat to freedom of academic enquiry and expression that is posed by both your decision to dismiss Professor Hage, and the terms in which it was conveyed to the public.

It is essential that scholars with relevant expertise be able to criticise the actions of any government or state, including their own. They should not, in doing so, find themselves ostracised, sacked or the subject of unwarranted accusations of racism.

Yours sincerely,

(Prof.) Frank Bongiorno AM FRHistS FASSA FAHA  
President, Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences