

Media Statement

26/10/2021

Flinders University urged to #stopthechop on Southgate and its staff

The Australian Health Promotion Association has expressed shock and dismay at the axing of critical academic roles in health equity with the announcement this week by Flinders University that positions held by Professor Fran Baum and colleagues will be disestablished and the Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity wound up.

Professor Baum is a Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professor of Public Health and an instrumental figure in health promotion and public health in Australia and globally. She was awarded as a Fellow of the Association in 2007 for her contributions to our knowledge, practice and institutions in health promotion.

As recently as 2020 the Institute was designated as the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Social, Political and Commercial Determinants of Health Equity, demonstrating its global leadership in addressing the determinants of health equity. The proposed changes by Flinders will affect a significant number of excellent researchers who are part of the Southgate team.

Association President, Dr Gemma Crawford, voiced her concern at the move stating, “Now more than ever we need strong and capable hands to help guide our efforts to address the social determinants of health in our increasingly fast-paced and complex world.”

“Professor Baum’s contribution as a thinker, advocate, leader and educator are legendary. So many of us have been inspired by her writing and presentations and her renowned contribution to health equity through the World Health Organization’s Commission on the Social Determinants of Health.”

“We need strong institutions and a strengthened higher education system to generate the solutions needed to tackle global health challenges. Now is not the time for disinvestment.”

The Australian Health Promotion Association urges Flinders to reconsider its decision.

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