Universities reject claims of gender language ‘ban’

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Australian universities have rejected claims they have banned the use of gender-specific language following comments made by federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham they were dictating “nanny state stuff”.

Mr Birmingham slammed tertiary education institutions who have issued style guides to use gender-neutral language, in a report by the Daily Telegraph saying they had placed a ban on words such as mankind, man-made, spokesman and manpower. Also included among the examples was the use of pronouns such as “he” for a generic person and “she” for a car or ship.

Some students have complained that they have lost marks for using what are grammatically correct terms, the newspaper reported.

Mr Birmingham said: “This just reinforces the stereotype of academic elites in ivory towers judging everyday Australians.

“Our universities should be better than this rubbish.”

But a number of universities have rejected the claims, saying they have only issued “guides” and not bans.

A spokeswoman from The University of Sydney said they have not banned the use of masculine pronouns.

“In cases where a person’s gender is not known, the university encourages students to use either both the feminine and masculine pronouns - she or he, s/he - or to use they,” the spokeswoman said.

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Ballard accuser reveals identity

REMY VARGA
The comedian who alleges ABC presenter Tom Ballard indecently assaulted him has revealed his identity on Twitter.

EXCLUSIVE

Heat on uni on white segregation

RICHARD FERGUSON, JANET ALBRECHTSEN
Melbourne University faces calls to cancel a ‘divisive’ dance piece that separates white audience members from people of colour.
"She", "mankind" and "workmanship" are among the gendered terms that some Australian universities have now banned.

In a move towards gender neutrality, some universities have taken to banning any words with gendered meaning.

As a result, students are losing marks on assignments if they are seen to be using language that isn't inclusive.

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- Opinion: Gender equality is not just a fight for women

Queensland University of Technology has employed the policy, excluding terms such as 'wife of' or 'mother of' as exclusive words, and has deemed the suffix 'man' as sexist.

The University of Sydney claims it would prefer its students to just be grammatically incorrect over being politically incorrect.

The acting dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Queensland, Professor Julie Dick agrees with the decision made by some universities.

"Students are advised to avoid gender-biased language in the same way they are advised to avoid racist language, clichés, contractions, colloquialisms, and slang in their essays," she says.

'Naughty Words' - How many banned words do you use on a regular basis?
He: used to refer to a man, boy, or male animal previously mentioned or easily identified.

Alternative: They

She: used to refer to a woman, girl, or female animal previously mentioned or easily identified.

She: used to refer to a ship, vehicle, country, or other inanimate thing regarded as female.

Alternative: They

Mankind: human beings considered collectively; the human race.

Alternative: Humanity

Sportsmanship: fair and generous behaviour or treatment of others, especially in a sporting contest.

Alternative: Good sport

Workmanship: the degree of skill with which a product is made or a job done.

Alternative: Work ethic

Wife: a married woman considered in relation to her spouse.

Alternative: Partner

Spokesman: a person who makes statements on behalf of a group or individual.

Alternative: Spokesperson

Chairman: the permanent or long-term president of a committee, company, or other organization.

Furthermore, students have been warned not to speak about women in a secondary position to someone else.

Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham openly disagrees with the policies, telling The Daily Mail the universities are enforcing "nanny state stuff" on students.

"Our universities should be better than this rubbish," he said.