

EGM 2025

Statement from the National Board of Amnesty International Australia in relation to the motion to re-admit Belinda Neal to Membership (Resolution 1)

The Board does not support the resolution to re-admit Belinda Neal to membership.

On 27 December 2024, the National Board considered a recommendation of the Member Standards Committee (MSC) to remove Ms Neal from membership pursuant to cl 11.5 of the *Amnesty International Australia Constitution* for breaches of the Values and Behaviours Charter and associated policies. The Board accepted the recommendation and decided to revoke Ms Neal's membership.

Ms Neal exercised her right to appeal, that decision, and thereby seek reinstatement as a member, to this Extraordinary General Meeting.

Due to the confidentiality provisions under the Whistleblower Policy, the Board is limited in the information it is able to provide surrounding the removal of Ms Neal from membership. However, the Board is able to provide the following information:-

1. In May 2024 and June 2024, the National Director of AIA received two separate protected disclosures, made in accordance with AIA's Whistleblower Policy.
2. After receiving the protected disclosures, and in accordance with the Whistleblower Policy, the National Director referred the allegations to be investigated by an independent law firm.
3. The investigator carried out its investigation between July 2024 and October 2024, which involved interviewing the whistleblowers (whose identity will remain confidential), obtaining further documents and making contact with Ms Neal described below;

Date	Summary of correspondence (taken from investigator's report)
23 August 2024	The investigator sent Ms Neal a letter to inform her of the allegations under investigation and inviting her to attend an interview with the investigator
23 August 2024	Ms Neal responded to the investigator and: a. Declined to participate in an interview; and b. Requested the investigator provide her with evidence in support of the allegations and a copy of the Terms of reference.

10 September 2024	the investigator sent a further letter to Ms Neal providing additional information about the allegations under investigation and inviting her to provide a written response to the investigator
26 September 2024	<p>Ms Neal responded to the Investigator, in which she included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. she disagrees that she did not decline to participate in an interview on 23 August 2024; b. with respect to the allegations provided to her by the Investigator on 10 September 2024, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the allegations were “imprecise, vague and unsupported by any evidence”; ii. she was “unable accurately ascertain what is referred to”; and iii. she denies the allegations “to the extent [she is] able to ascertain what is referred to”.
30 September 2024	<p>the investigator responded to Ms Neal, and said, in summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. it was understood from Ms Neal’s email on 23 August 2024 that she was not prepared to attend an interview; b. the information provided to Ms Neal to date was sufficient for her to respond to the allegations against her.

4. The investigator published its report on 23 October 2024. In that report, the investigator substantiated the following allegation (meaning that on the balance of probabilities the investigator was satisfied that the conduct occurred);
 - c. On or after 19 August 2023 (but before 1 September 2023), Ms Neal disclosed to a former member of AIA the AIA National Board's confidential decision to exercise its discretion to:
 - i. remove the former member from membership; and
 - ii. issue a strong warning to two separate AIA members, prior to the formal communication of the decision to the former member by the National Board on 1 September 2023.
5. Ms Neal was provided with a copy of the investigator's report on 19 November 2024 and an opportunity to respond to the report by 9 December 2024. The National Board considered that it was appropriate for this matter to be referred to the

Member Standards Committee. Ms Neal provided her position on 9 December 2024, which was provided to the Member Standards Committee for their consideration.

6. The Member Standards Committee met to consider this issue on 13 December 2024 and considered that the misconduct was serious and provided the National Board with a recommendation that Ms Neal be removed from membership.
7. On 13 December 2024, Ms Neal was informed of the decision of the Member Standards Committee and was provided with an opportunity to make a written submission to the National Board for its consideration at its meeting (then scheduled for 17 December 2024) regarding the Member Standards Committee's recommendation to remove Ms Neal from membership.
8. On 16 December 2024, Ms Neal informed AIA that she believed that she had not been provided with enough time and sought an extension. The National Board deferred its consideration of the Member Standards Committee's recommendation until 27 December 2024 and provided Ms Neal with an extension to send her written submission until 23 December 2024.
9. On 27 December 2024, the National Board met to consider the Member Standards Committee's recommendation. After consideration, the National Board decided to remove Ms Neal from membership.
10. For the avoidance of any doubt, the allegations raised in the protected disclosures are not related to the circumstances of her removal from her position of director of the National Board.