

Getting health research

IN the recent report on her visit to Australia, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz made a strong call for self-determination of Australia's First Peoples and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led policy, programs and research.

Ms Tauli-Corpuz specifically recommended that the Australian Government "provide sustained long-term support for Indigenous-led health research".

We at the Lowitja Institute, call on the Federal Government to accept Ms Tauli-Corpuz's recommendation and continue the important work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in the health and health research space.

She noted that "Aboriginal-led health research capacity has been established and should be

drawn upon to inform policies. Strengthened financial and political support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led expertise ... is crucial in order to close the gap in relation to key health inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples".

It is promising that Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has articulated the Government's commitment to "building a new way of working together with Indigenous leaders and their communities to create local solutions – putting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the centre of decision making in their regions".

We welcome that commitment but also know that a fundamental shift needs to occur in the way health policy is developed and implemented in order to redress that disconnect between investment and result.



Romlie Mokak

In order to achieve significant, measurable, positive change in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we need to

expand the idea of value built into that investment. Expand it from the quantum — so many dollars to achieve so many results— to a concept that places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, leadership, institutions and solutions at the centre of policymaking. A concept that resets the power balance between those making the decisions and those for whom the policy is intended.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know that our cultures and long-held knowledges are protective of our health and that our wellbeing is located in those values, beliefs and knowledges. Also, that our obligations go far beyond a point-in-time funding agreement with government; they run far and deep to our ancestors and to our futures.

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A world lacking t

IWENT to the rally in Sydney for Tane Chatfield, who recently died in custody, to also pay respect to others who have suffered the same tragic fate.

The divide between Aboriginal and other people was truly confronting.

We gathered in a small circle surrounded by those in the city hub leaving work and getting ready for a night celebrating their privilege in bars, coffee shops and restaurants.

It all became too surreal as the names of those who had died were read out one by one.

In our solemn mourning within the circle you would occasionally catch the eyes of those outside of the group, non-Aboriginal people just wanting a drink, to catch up and enjoy a meal after work, many of whom were upset with our being there, the hatred and confusion visible in their eyes.

Anyone who doubts racism exists in Australia only has to spend a couple of minutes on social media.

Only last week Aboriginal

everyone outside our community is profiting from our demise.

This coincides with the lack of affordability in housing forcing extended families to live in overcrowded shoeboxes while hipsters enjoy their privilege, coming and going and parking where they please.

When we are struggling just to survive why then also do we have to face the unrelenting hatred and tirades of racism on social media and in public places where we gather? It's almost as if many non-Aboriginal Australians are angry we survived.

It has nothing to do with truth, intelligence or integrity, as demonstrated recently when former prime minister Tony Abbott addressed a group of ultra-conservatives in London. Abbott demonstrated a sense of entitlement when he gave praise in maintaining close friendships with former prime minister John Howard and Catholic cardinal George Pell.

Do not forget that it was John Howard who manufactured the NT Intervention, built on false



Woolombi Waters

idea of criticism or recent history.

As Aboriginal people who live with such scrutiny all our lives, not even able to afford parking close to the grounds to watch our own football tournament, could

meanwhile we could be entering a period of national and even civilizational decline."

The ignorance and lack of understanding behind such statements is frustrating.

No mention of the lack of education and understanding towards our people, our history and the truth of our struggle.

As Tony Abbott was addressing the crowd in London, the Dove line of beauty products was being forced to apologise after the brand was accused of racism over an advertisement where a black woman after applying a beauty lotion took off her shirt to reveal that she had become white. (See story, page 26.)

The only way such an advertisement could have made it through review prior to broadcast was that its message was intentional. It's a marketing strategy that uses social media and other technologies to increase brand awareness, often through controversial imagery.

Last year, Qiaobi's laundry detergent used the same

Only last week Aboriginal supermodel Samantha Harris opened up regarding the vile attacks she receives, saying: "The amount of hurtful & racist comments I receive is unbelievable..."

I was in Sydney attending the Koori Rugby League Knockout and everywhere is evidence of this class and racial divide, where even parking becomes an income test.

Inside the ground, over and over again you would hear through the loudspeaker about cars being towed away, tow trucks and parking attendants highly visible as you walked to the ground. It's almost as if

an intervention, but on his testimony revealed on *Lateline*, when a senior staff member of Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough claimed to be a child worker and made false accusations of paedophilia rings in Aboriginal communities.

Meanwhile George Pell, Australia's highest-ranking Catholic, recently returned to Australia after fleeing to the Vatican in Rome after being summonsed to face multiple sex offence charges, allegedly protecting a paedophile ring in the Catholic Church.

In claiming such a close relationship with two such men, Abbott obviously dismissed any

own racial teaming, could you even begin to imagine such privilege?

Despite all this power, what was even more evident than his unacknowledged privilege in Abbott's address was his white fragility – and lack of acknowledgment of our history, and the brutal truth behind our colonial past.

"To a greater or lesser extent, in most Western countries, we can't keep our borders secure, we can't keep our industries intact, and we can't preserve a moral order once taken for granted," he said. "Eventually, something will crystallise out of this age of disruption, but in the

detergent used the same strategy where an Asian woman shoves a detergent pod into the wash with a black man who emerges from the washing machine as a light-skinned Asian man.

Dove has used the strategy before. In 2011 the business caused controversy with an ad showing three women standing side by side, each with lighter skin. It had an African-American woman standing in front of the 'before' sign and a white woman standing in front of the 'after' sign, with the ad reading 'Visibly more beautiful skin'.

And earlier this year Pepsi