



International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Partnership for Justice in Health (P4JH) calls for professional responsibility in the media

An alliance of health and justice experts has called on the Australian media to address racist and unethical reporting in its ranks that adds to the harm inflicted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and breaches professional standards.

The call from the Partnership for Justice in Health (P4JH) comes in line with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Its theme: Voices for Action Against Racism brings to the fore the need for honest and respectful discourse around racism and its impacts.

The P4JH is urging media corporations and journalists alike to take seriously their roles as leaders of public debate and discourse and inflict no further harm on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities as they grieve the loss of their loved ones.

The Partnership also sends love and solidarity to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families mourning the loss of their loved ones, especially to the Walker family and broader Warlpiri community during this incredibly difficult time.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families exposed to the failings and injustices within health and justice systems continue to be the target of persistent, blatantly biased and unethical reporting from sections of the Australian media,” said co-chair Karl Briscoe, CEO of National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP).

Most recently this has been demonstrated in coverage of the fatal shooting of Kumanjayi Walker in Yuendumu, particularly following the acquittal of police officer Zachary Rolfe of murder and related charges.

“The justice system is already unjust enough for First Nations peoples, accompanying media campaigns that disparage our loved ones in attempts to justify their deaths at the hands of the system are cruel and careless examples of what should be antiquated journalism.”

“We call for the upholding of basic professional responsibility and standards.”

Co-chair Adjunct Professor Janine Mohamed, CEO Lowitja Institute, said journalists and media outlets hold significant influence and power over how the truth is framed in this country.

“As long as journalists persist in gatekeeping public discourse through purposeful ignorance and the exclusion and undermining of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experiences, there will never be effective national conversations about racism in Australia,” Janine said.

The P4JH is calling on media companies to employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander journalists, and executives to engage in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led processes to improve the way all journalists work with First Nations peoples, communities and stories. These are critical steps towards upholding the values of fair and unbiased coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The P4JH is also encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities to share their experiences of racism with the *Call it Out* online reporting tool launched this week by the Jumbunna Institute and the National Justice Project (NJP).

“By using Call it Out to ‘call out’ racism, First Nations peoples will help to tell the true story of racism in this country,” said Adjunct Professor George Newhouse, CEO of NJP.

“Collecting, analysing and reporting on First Nations people’s experiences of racism will enable us and community leaders to continue the fight against racism and protect future generations”.

Read more about the *Call it Out* project here: callitout.com.au

For media enquiries please contact the P4JH at secretariat@p4jh.org.au or 02 6221 9229

The Partnership for Justice in Health (P4JH) is an alliance of self-determining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, legal experts, and national peak health and justice organisations committed to working together to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and justice outcomes through addressing racism at individual, institutional and systemic levels, specifically focusing on the health and justice systems.