

Joint Statement on racism directed at Adam Goodes

“Australia must and can be better than this”

Following the weekend’s events when prominent Aboriginal AFL player and former Australian of the Year, Adam Goodes was booed at every turn during the Swans v West Coast Eagles AFL match.

Today in advance of the weekend round of AFL, 150 organisations (listed overleaf) join together to call for renewed efforts to stamp out racism in sport and everyday life.

For too long, we have witnessed the poor treatment of Sydney Swans star and dual Brownlow medallist Adam Goodes at the hands of fans during AFL matches. A proud Ambassador of the “Racism. It Stops with Me” Campaign, Goodes is a strong advocate for standing up against racism and for issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The booing, which has snowballed out of control this year since Goodes proudly displayed his culture during the AFL Indigenous Round, appears to be in large part racially motivated.

Adam Goodes is an outstanding Australian and should be commended for displaying a culture all Australians should celebrate and be proud of, and for taking a courageous stance against racism. The behaviour of the crowd that booed him is absolutely unacceptable and must stop.

To dismiss claims of racism as just banter is to use football as a shield for prejudice. Legitimate barracking for one’s team is a tradition that has been alive as long as the game itself but, when such behaviour coincides with cultural displays and Goodes’ efforts to stop racism, it is clear that a line has been crossed to racial abuse.

To suggest that this kind of behaviour does not have an effect is to deny the evidence about the known health impacts of racism. These are not diminished simply because the person being subjected to racial abuse is an elite athlete. It is deeply disturbing that this kind of racism may influence whether a player decides to take the field for one match or is forced out of the game for good.

If this isn’t stamped out, then we must ask what message this sends to future generations of Australians about the forms of behaviour that we find acceptable in this country. And what message does it send to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about their culture, and what they can expect should they want to excel in sport or other fields.

It is a great stain on our nation that the experience of Adam Goodes is the lived experience of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and there is ample evidence that demonstrates the negative impact on mental and physical health, as well as life opportunities.

Racism has no place in Australian sport or our society at large. We commend the actions that have been taken inside and out of the AFL, but call on all sports and sporting clubs to develop coherent and far reaching strategies in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people to stamp out racism in sport.

As a starting point, codes and clubs should encourage members and supporters to join the 'Racism: It Stops with Me' campaign at <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au>

Australia must and can be better than this.

For more information or interviews, contact:

This statement is supported by the following organisations:

Aboriginal Disability Network NSW
Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Services
Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of New South Wales
Advocacy Tasmania
Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation
All Together Now
Amnesty International
ANECYS
ANTaR
Arab Council Australia
Armenian National Committee of Australia
Arnold Bloch Leibler
Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council
Australian College of Midwives
Australian Council of Social Services
Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)
Australian Football League Players Association
Australian Hellenic Council
Australian Human Rights Centre, UNSW.
Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
Australian Indigenous Psychologist Association (AIPA)
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
Australian Medical Association (AMA)
Australian Physiotherapy Association
Australian Student & Novice Nurse Association
B'nai Brith Anti-Defamation Commission
Bisexual Alliance Victoria
Bond University
Catholic Education South Australia
Centacare South West NSW
Centre for Multicultural Youth
Chinese Australian Forum (CAF)
Coleman Rail
Commission for Equal Opportunity South Australia
Commissioner for Children and Young People Victoria
Commonwealth Ombudsman
Communication Rights Australia
Confederation of Australian Motor Sport
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Craig Edmonds Consulting Services
CRANApus
Cricket Australia
Deaths in Custody Watch Committee Inc WA
Disability Discrimination Legal Services
Diversity Council of Australia
Eastern Community Legal Centre
Edith Cowan University
Executive Council of Australian Jewry
Family Worker Training and Development Programme

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Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)
Federation University
First Peoples Disability Network (Australia)
Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre
Football Federation Australia (FFA)
Goldfields Land and Sea Council
Healing Foundation
Human Rights Council of Australia
Human Rights Law Centre
Indigenous Allied Health Australia
Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, UTS
Justice Connect
Know the Game
KPMG
Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation
Lendlease
Liberty Victoria
Lord Mayor, City of Sydney
Marrickville Council
Melbourne High School
Menzies School of Health Research
Mildura Rural City Council
Misschu
Muru Marri, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW Australia
Naracoorte Lucindale Council
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Health Worker Association
National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Association
National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Physiotherapists
National Association of Community Legal Centres
National Australia Bank
National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)
National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
National Native Title Council
National Rugby League (NRL)
Netball Australia – Julia Symons
Northside Community Service
NSW Aboriginal Land Council
NSW Jewish Board of Deputies
OCTEC
Oxfam Australia
People with Disability Australia Incorporated
Play by the Rules
Podmore Foundation
Professor Tom Calma AO – founding Chair of the Close the Gap Campaign
Public Health Association of Australia
Public Transport Ombudsman VIC
QANTAS
Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services (QAIL)
Randwick City Council
Recognise
Reconciliation Australia
Reconciliation South Australia
Red Dust Role Models
Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre
Richmond Football Club
Save the Children
SBS
SCALES Community Legal Centre
Scanlon Foundation
Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
Settlement Services International
Shire of Katanning

Sisters Inside
Skilled Migrant Professionals
So Change Inc
Softball Australia
St Vincent de Paul Society
Table Tennis Australia
TCL Drilling Australia
The Bridge of Hope Foundation Inc
The Castan Centre – Monash University
The Challenging Racism Project, University of Western Sydney
The Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd (CASS Group)
The Construction Training Centre Qld
The Fred Hollows Foundation
The Lowitja Institute
The Passion of Purpose Group
The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Transgender Victoria
Twitter Australia
Unions NSW
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
Uniting Church In Australia
University of South Australia -
Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
Victorian College of the Arts
Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation
Welcoming Intercultural Neighbours
Whyndam Community and Education Centre
Wilin Centre
Wirrpanda Foundation
Women in Prison Advocacy Network (WIPAN)
Women's Legal Services NSW
Yarraville Community Centre
YWCA