

Who Watches the Media?

Race-related reporting in Australian mainstream media

December 2017



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Acronyms

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACMA	Australian Communications and Media Authority
APC	Australian Press Council
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
IMC	Independent Media Council of Australia
MDA	Media Diversity Australia
MEAA	Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance
NGO	Non-government organisation
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UTS	University of Technology Sydney

Glossary

Content analysis: A research tool that systematically assesses communication *content*. This can be applied to a range of textual formats: written, visual or audio. It seeks to identify and quantify patterns in communication content.

Daesh: A term for Islamic State or ISIS.

Discourse analysis: A research tool that assesses the use of *language*: written, visual or audio. This can be applied to a range of texts and contexts. It assesses how certain uses of language generate certain meanings.

Race: While there are no valid biological criteria for dividing people into distinct racial categories, the term 'race' is often used to describe a person's physical features, such as skin colour, hair type and/or colour, body shape or facial features, which can lead to conclusions about their racial background.

Racial background: A person's racial background comprises 'race', ancestry, nationality, accent and cultural background, which includes religion, food, arts and crafts, clothing, and other cultural practices.

Racism: Unjust covert or overt behaviour towards a person or a group on the basis of their racial background. This might be perpetrated by a person, a group, an organisation, or a system.

Interpersonal racism manifests in behaviours such as:

- believing your race is superior to another race;
- offensive or aggressive behaviour towards somebody because of their race or racial background;
- believing some groups do not belong in a society;
- actively avoiding or excluding people from a specific racial background because it is believed they do not belong; or
- believing everyone should behave according to certain values, particularly those called 'national' but are, in fact, not.

Institutionalised racism manifests in policies and written or unwritten procedures by a government or organisation (and their employees or other representatives). This results in unjust behaviour that targets a person or group because of their racial background.

Executive summary

In 2016, All Together Now commenced work to gain a better understanding of race-related reporting in the Australian media. Our background research indicated that the ways in which race is portrayed in the media must be taken seriously. The media is often the only interaction audiences have with people from other cultures, nationalities or ethnicities. With this in mind, the media plays a crucial role in forming and shaping public perceptions of race. These perceptions then affect how the public interacts with people from different racial backgrounds.¹

Research demonstrates that the language the media uses to describe racial backgrounds,² and the portrayals the media uses to depict racial backgrounds, impacts on attitudes towards race.³ Indeed, the media has an agenda-setting role that informs how the general public treats migrants.⁴ And, when ethnic minorities occupy a central role in mainstream media, they are often portrayed as threatening to the Anglo mainstream.⁵

Racial discrimination in the media can be reported to regulatory bodies, but complainants often have difficulty in achieving favourable outcomes from this complex and time-sensitive process.⁶

To investigate the extent to which race-related reporting is an issue in Australia, All Together Now worked with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to create a framework for collecting data about race-related reports. The research team used the framework to monitor and collect data published by Australia's four most read online newspapers (*The Australian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Herald Sun*), and the four most watched TV current affairs programs (*A Current Affair*, *The Project*, *60 Minutes*, *7:30*).

¹ Downing, J. & Husband, C., 2005. *Representing 'race': racisms, ethnicities and media*. London: Sage.

² Saeed, A., 2007. Media, racism and Islamophobia: the representation of Islam and Muslims in the media, *Sociology compass*, 56 (1), 443–462.

³ Schemer, C., 2014. Media effects on racial attitudes: evidence from a three-wave panel survey in a political campaign, *International journal of public opinion research*, 26 (4), 531–542.

⁴ Nolan, D., 2011. Mediated multiculturalism: newspaper representations of Sudanese migrants in Australia, *Journal of intercultural studies*, 32 (6), 655–671.

⁵ Phillips, G., 2011. Reporting diversity: the representation of ethnic minorities in Australia's television current affairs programs, *Media international Australia*, 139, 23–31.

⁶ Jakubowicz, A. & Seneviratne, K., 1996. *Ethnic conflict and the Australian media*. Sydney: Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, University of Technology.

All Together Now's team sampled 124 opinion-based reports over a six-month period. The data analysis involved counting the instances of race-related reports about specific groups, finding patterns in the reports, and then narrowing down the findings by combining the patterns. The highest number of articles about a single group of people were about Muslim people, with other groups represented in smaller percentages (see Part 3 for more details).

The 68 articles about Muslim people were analysed in greater detail. Twenty were neutral, five were positive and 43 were negative (the negative stories being around one third of all 124 articles sampled). The negative reports showed that, over the six-month sample period, Muslims were often conflated with terrorism, thereby fuelling a stereotype that 'Muslims are terrorists'.

The small number of race-related articles and TV segments about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during the sample period were mostly neutral or positive. This prompted All Together Now to question the ways in which decisions are made by social commentators — and news agencies more broadly — about which groups of people to cover and commentate on. This can be fraught when they choose to cover and commentate on groups to which they themselves do not belong.

All Together Now also reviewed various Australian media regulations with a specific focus on the codes of conduct that enable audiences to make complaints about racism in the media. Of note is that, under some codes, audiences have only 30 days to make a complaint, which is inadequate when much of today's news is published online, and sometimes remains online indefinitely. It is unclear whether some racist opinion-based reports might constitute a breach, as the regulators take into consideration the tone and context used to discuss race.

In total, 62 of the 124 race-based reports collected during the six-month period express racist views through their title, content, a picture, and/or tone of voice. Therefore, All Together Now considers that these 62 articles and TV segments likely contravene one or more of the codes of conduct.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen media regulations in relation to race-based reporting

- The regulations covering media conduct (and journalistic standards) must be strengthened so that definitions of racism include both overt and covert forms.
- In today's online age, audiences should be permitted to make complaints about media content at any time. The one-month deadline for making complaints should be removed to make it easier for audiences to make complaints about racist media content.
- Response times by the regulators must be improved so that reports deemed racist are quickly rectified.

2. News agencies must support journalists to discuss race sensitively

- News agencies must ensure journalists receive training about racism so that fewer journalists file negative race-based reports.
- News agencies must hire more journalists from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and ensure they receive mentoring if requested to encourage greater cultural diversity among media workers and content.
- News agencies must ensure that their editorial policies are racially aware.

3. Continue media monitoring and analysis

- Media monitoring needs to be an ongoing practice to track changes in race-related reporting over time.

Background

In 2015, All Together Now was honoured to have Professor Andrew Jakubowicz sit on its board for six months. As the editor of *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media*,⁷ Professor Jakubowicz highlighted the need for research that examines the impact of race-based reporting on people of colour in Australia. All Together Now's board of directors agreed that there was a compelling case for action and decided to undertake precisely this kind of research, the outcomes of which are featured in this report. As such, All Together Now's board would like to thank Professor Jakubowicz for his foreshadowing and encouragement of this report, *Who Watches the Media?*

All Together Now was established in 2010, a time when there was very little constructive public conversation about racism in Australia. Since then, numerous circumstances have sought to change this, such as the Human Rights Commission's national campaign 'Racism: It Stops with Me', Beyond Blue's 'Invisible Discriminator' campaign and All Together Now's 'Everyday Racism' app. Each has positively impacted on the public conversation. However, All Together Now has observed that, outside of these proactive campaigns, public discussions about racism remain divisive or defensive, and very rarely solutions-based.

This report uncovers new findings that have implications for media makers, social commentators and regulatory bodies, as well as the organisations that fund and support them, including advertisers. It has been inspired by work undertaken by other non-government organisations (NGOs) such as Race Forward and Haas Institute in the United States of America (USA) and the Runnymede Trust in the United Kingdom (UK).

All Together Now's team was guided by Ian Haney Lopez's report on racial politics: 'Race and economic jeopardy for all: a framing paper for defeating dog whistle politics.'⁸ Lopez's approach considers how politicians use race to divide people and win votes. While this report does not delve into the political implications of its findings, Lopez's perspective offered theoretical support for understanding race bias and national security in the case

⁷ Goodall, H., Jakubowicz, A. & Martin, J., 1994. *Racism, ethnicity and the media*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

⁸ Lopez, H., 2016. *Race and economic jeopardy for all: a framing paper for defeating dog whistle politics*. Washington: AFL-CIO.

study, and his concepts of 'coded racism', 'routine racism' and 'strategic racism'⁹ helped the research team identify and label depictions of race.

Who Watches the Media? is currently an unfunded, volunteer-run project. It would not have been possible without the volunteers and interns who supported this work with their time, energy and knowledge. All Together Now would like to thank Kayleigh Van Den Berg, Ruby-Ann Schmelzer, Shelvy Tjing, Hiya Ganju and Emily Savage for their research and analysis during this project.

All Together Now would also like to thank: Karin Waldmann and Jessica Raschke for providing advice and support during the final phase of this project; Deliana Iacoban and Priscilla Brice for their determination in bringing these findings to light using a scientific approach; and Dr Christina Ho at UTS for her ongoing support, mentorship and encouragement throughout this project.

⁹ *ibid.*

Part 1: Overview

1.1 Literature review

The literature review explored the portrayal of race in the media by using sources published since 2001 that primarily focus on the Australian context. The gaps within the literature are the result of an ever-changing media landscape, which now incorporates social media and other non-traditional forms of publishing and ways of sharing information.

Definitions of race

It is important to understand race in relation to the media. One key definition explains that race is ‘without a fixed or inherently objective definition and exists primarily for purposes of social stratification.’¹⁰ In the media, race is a ‘mode of construction’ that ‘derives on power from social, psychological dynamics of social categorisation.’¹¹

To understand these definitions of race, their applications must also be taken into account. David Nolan¹² asserts that the media has two primary roles in delivering messages about race. It can create and reinforce social hierarchies and forms of discrimination, but can also provide spaces where ‘imposed identities can be resisted, challenged and changed.’¹³

Race is a social construction, and these constructs are used by those in power — and through the media — to generate a social hierarchy. Given that the media is often the only interaction people have with racial backgrounds other than their own, these interactions are powerful instances in which perceptions of race are formed and shaped. They could be positive, neutral or negative perceptions.

¹⁰ Ortiz, L. & Jani, J., 2010. Critical race theory: a transformational model for teaching diversity, *Journal of social work education*, 10 (5), 175–193.

¹¹ Downing & Husband, *Representing ‘race’*.

¹² Nolan, Mediated multiculturalism.

¹³ *ibid.*

Asylum seekers and other immigrants

Research into the media coverage of asylum seekers has found that covert images and stereotypes are often used, which the media tends to portray as fact. Sharon Pickering¹⁴ demonstrates that the media portrays asylum seekers as a 'problem' for Australia. Through discourse analysis, she concludes that asylum seekers are often depicted through four lenses:

1. Criminality: when asylum seekers are reported to have committed crimes;
2. War: through the use of metaphors (for example, 'sustained assault' or 'incursion');
3. Health: portraying asylum seekers as bringing disease to Australia and exploiting the Australian health system; and
4. Race.

Content analysis has also demonstrated the covert nature of racism. Nolan explores the repeated use of particular stereotypes of migrant groups in the media, leading to discrimination. He noted that, through the media's agenda-setting role, the public is informed that migrants are either respected or seen as a 'problem'.¹⁵

Islam

Islamic people are currently one of the most commonly represented groups in the Australian media. Amir Saeed¹⁶ uses content analysis to explore the ways in which Islam is presented in the UK's media, but his research results are relevant to the Australian context, as this report's findings show. He makes an important distinction between 'classical racism' and 'new racism', the latter being subtler and often used by the media to covertly portray minorities negatively.¹⁷ This ideological discourse informs how the West views itself and therefore how it operates in relation to other cultural groups.

Language is a key factor in the representation of race in the media, and the language used to depict race greatly influences the audience's perception of race.¹⁸ Saeed's research

¹⁴ Pickering, S., 2001. Common sense and original deviancy: news discourses and asylum seekers in Australia, *Journal of refugee studies*, (14) 2, 169–186.

¹⁵ Nolan, Mediated multiculturalism.

¹⁶ Saeed, Media, racism and Islamophobia.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

demonstrates that misrepresentations of Muslims can be linked to the development of Islamophobia.¹⁹

In the Australian media, Muslim asylum seekers are often discussed by employing the 'invasion' narrative. This approach dates back to colonialism and has been pervasive in Pauline Hanson's rhetoric about Asian migrants. The media uses images of Muslim women to reinforce stereotypes: 'the Muslim woman is routinely represented as subordinate and passive, an enigma shrouded in the black veil of religious oppression.'²⁰ This also plays into the narrative of Islam as a threat: 'the veil represents impenetrable secrecy and an unnerving suspicion that veiled women have something to hide.'²¹

Australian media

In a changing technological landscape, traditional media and mainstream news sources are strongly preferred by the public. An unpublished study of Australian audiences conducted by Usha Rodrigues and Yin Paradies shows that 'television and news websites of Australian mainstream print and broadcasting media remain ahead in all aspects of trust as a news source,'²² with television news ahead of other platforms. This indicates that Australian television current affairs programs are among the most influential sources of news, yet ethnic minorities generally occupy peripheral roles when they are featured.²³ When ethnic minorities do have a central role, they tend to be portrayed as menacing or threatening to the Anglo-Celtic mainstream. This qualitative analysis also reveals that both news and commercial current affairs subtly convey 'a sense of racial hierarchy in which the Anglo dominates.'²⁴

Rodrigues and Paradies²⁵ and Gail Phillips²⁶ suggest a preference for television and mainstream media outlets, a need for international news, and a prevalence of negative representations of audiences from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Aly, A. & Walker, D., 2007. Veiled threats: recurrent cultural anxieties in Australia, *Journal of Muslim minority affairs*, 27 (2), 203–214.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Rodrigues, M. & Paradies, Y., 2017. News consumption patterns and intercultural relations in Australia. Paper presented at *ADI annual international conference*, Deakin University, Geelong.

²³ Phillips, Reporting diversity.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Rodrigues & Paradies, News consumption patterns.

Our research aims to support and complement these studies to better understand how race is represented in Australian mainstream media.

Summary

It is notable that depictions of race in the media are not blatantly racist. Instead, they covertly promote stereotypes that become ingrained and accepted as truth.

In terms of representation, fear stands out as the tool most often used by the media to incite racial discrimination. This is done through language and the repeated use of negative images, which have become synonymous with certain groups. It is evident that many groups are portrayed as the 'other' through tropes such as 'us versus them'. These attitudes are propagated and maintained in the public sphere through media, such as mainstream current affairs programs.

An op-ed in the *New York Times* recently highlighted the impact that racism perpetrated by the media has on individuals:

racism doesn't have to be experienced in person to affect our health — taking it in the form of news coverage is likely to have similar effects. After all, studies have shown²⁷ that ...when television viewers observe scenes depicting racism, their blood pressure remains elevated long after the scenes are over. That means it's reasonable to believe that every time we see a TV news segment or even get a notification on our phones about an event, statement or policy that we believe represents discrimination, our bodies pay the price.²⁸

Much of the available literature is not recent and more studies are needed to explain the interaction between race and the media. Given that the news is increasingly shared and consumed through social media, a study that examines the ramifications of consuming mainstream social commentary via social media might complement these findings. Further, studies of the intersectionality between media, race, gender and class would shed light on how other social factors might shape race-related discourses.

²⁶ Phillips, Reporting diversity.

²⁷ Fang, C. & Myers, F., 2001. The effects of racial stressors and hostility on cardiovascular reactivity in African American and Caucasian men, *Health psychology*, 20 (1), 64–70.

²⁸ Jacobs, D., 2017. *We're sick of racism, literally* [online]. *New York Times*. Available from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/11/opinion/sunday/sick-of-racism-literally.html> [accessed 15 November 2017].

1.2 Research stages

All Together Now undertook this study in collaboration with UTS between July 2016 and December 2017 to test these theories in practice. The *Who Watches the Media?* project was carried out in three stages, as described in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research stages

Stage 1	In 2016, we built a framework that would later become the means of monitoring and storing data for our research. The framework is an online form that feeds information into a database. The form prompted our volunteers with very specific questions, thereby ensuring that we were consistent in our sampling approach.
Stage 2	Over six months, from mid-January until mid-July 2017, we collected data through sampling race-related reports published by TV and online news publications with a viewership or readership of at least 500,000. This is explained in greater detail in Part 2 of this report.
Stage 3	From August to November 2017, we undertook an in-depth analysis of the samples. The focus topic was selected based on our findings in Stage 2. This is explained in greater detail in Part 3 of this report.

Part 2: Methodology

2.1 Theories

The All Together Now team used a range of theories during the course of this project to ensure that data was collected, stored and analysed consistently.

- **Sampling theory:** this involves a consistently taken sample of an appropriate size that will yield results that can be applied to the population as a whole.²⁹ In our case study, the generalisation applies to race-based reports within the six-month period sampled from the eight media channels selected for monitoring. Quota sampling was used to obtain a sample representative of the overall race-based reports; the sources were divided by mediums of publication, then a quota sample was drawn from each group: TV and newspapers. The sampling was conducted weekly.
- **Quantitative analysis:** to facilitate our data analysis, our samples were automatically stored in a database. The data was collected, cleaned and counted. We intersected codes (such as 'race', 'most popular issues' and 'publication') that were assigned during data collection, and then obtained refined figures when counting the samples. We are confident similar results would be obtained if our study was replicated by following the steps described and using the same variables.
- **Qualitative analysis:** we adopted Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis approach in looking closely at textual elements: vocabulary, grammar and textual relations.³⁰ To make the analysis relevant to our project, we took Lopez's classification of racism (coded, routine and strategic racism; these terms are explained in more detail below)³¹ and identified common tropes in our sample. Fairclough's approach has been criticised for the analysis being done on single texts, which 'leaves little space for the possibility that the struggle is not yet over and that the discursive practices can still work to change the social order.'³² The research team overcame this limitation by looking at several

²⁹ Collins, H., 2015. *Creative research: the theory and practice of research for the creative industries*. London: Fairchild Books.

³⁰ Fairclough, N., 2003. *Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.

³¹ Lopez, *Race and economic jeopardy for all*.

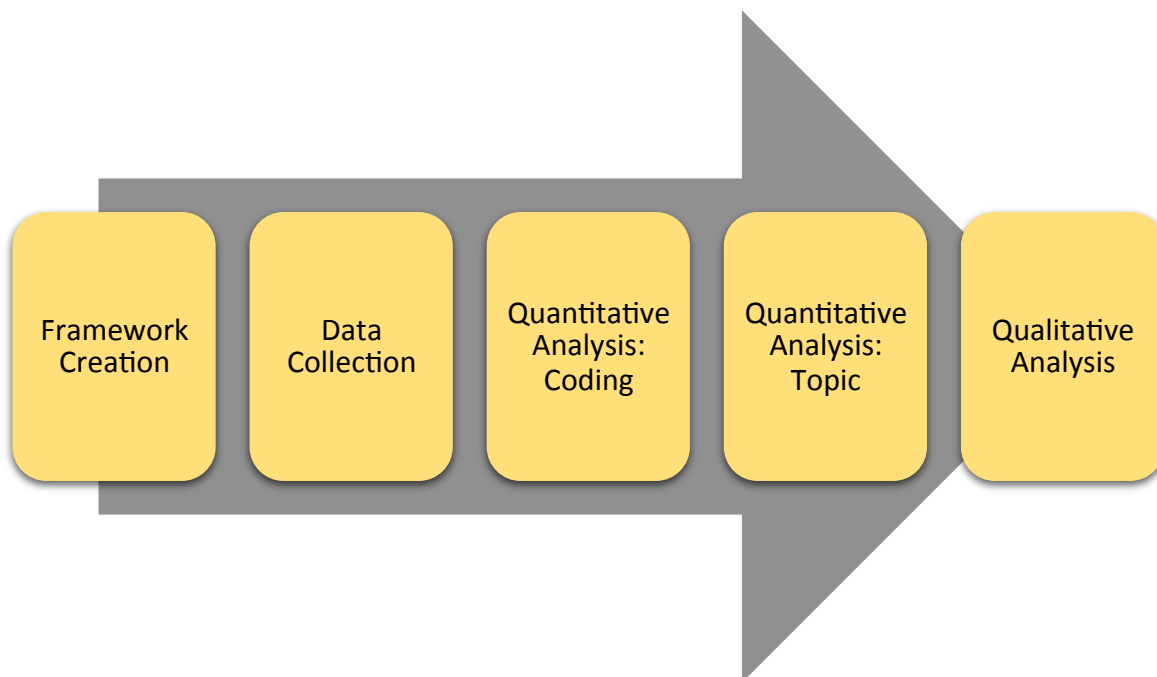
³² Phillips, L. & Jørgensen, M., 2002. *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage.

examples in our sample and identifying patterns that fit larger race-related social discourses and multiple forms of racism.

Coded racism involves the use of stereotypes such as portraying white people as hardworking, innocent and endangered, while people of colour are depicted as dangerous, lazy, predatory and perpetual foreigners. *Routine racism* refers to how we automatically judge others through implicit biases, absorbing the mentioned stereotypes as part of our cultural inheritance, learned from family, media or school or work. *Strategic racism* is expressed through decisions to manipulate racial fears and hatreds of others, to spark racial anxiety, while hiding the racism from opponents and supporters.³³

The ways in which the research team applied these theories and methods is described below.

Figure 2: The five steps of the methodological process



³³ Lopez, *Race and economic jeopardy for all*.

2.2 Data collection method

Our team sampled articles published or broadcast by Australian-based digital newspapers and current affairs shows that have a daily readership or viewership higher than 500,000 per publication. This was determined by Roy Morgan Research readership statistics³⁴ for 2016 and TV Tonight viewership numbers³⁵ for 2016–2017.

Figure 3: Media outlets sampled during the course of this project

Online newspaper platforms	Online current affairs TV programs
<i>The Australian</i> (News Limited) <i>Daily Telegraph</i> (News Limited) <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (Fairfax Media Limited) <i>Herald Sun</i> (News Limited)	<i>A Current Affair</i> (Nine Network) <i>The Project</i> (Network Ten) <i>60 Minutes</i> (Nine Network) <i>7:30</i> (ABC1, ABC News 24)

The research team monitored the online newspaper platforms and online current affairs TV programs, seen in Figure 3, from mid-January 2017 until mid-July 2017, to collect data over six months.

Online newspaper platforms

Using our framework, our team collected data about race-based reports that use a positive, negative or neutral angle on race. In instances where an article was difficult to obtain, our team accessed it through a different publication (than those listed in Figure 3) that belong to the same news agency.

Online current affairs TV programs

We started monitoring the most watched current affairs TV programs in mid-January 2017. The rankings remained consistent, with viewership only fluctuating during weekends or important televised sport events. These fluctuations did not alter audience preferences for current affairs shows, and the sampled programs always made it into the top 20 most watched programs (*A Current Affair*, *The Project*, *60 Minutes* and *7:30*).

³⁴ Roy Morgan Research, 2017. *Australian readership results September 2016* [online]. Available from <http://www.roymorgan.com/industries/media/readership/newspaper-readership> [accessed 25 January 2017].

³⁵ TV Tonight, 2017. *Timeshifted* [online]. Available from <http://tvtonight.com.au/category/timeshifted> [accessed 10 July 2017].

2.3 Limitations and ethical considerations

Key limitations included the scarce resources allocated to this project, the continuously changing media landscape, and the potential for adverse impacts on the groups that are highlighted in this report.

Given the limited funding for this project, the research team did not have access to paid subscriptions or print publications, and therefore media monitoring was limited to mainstream media outlets available online. Given that the media landscape is constantly changing, we have offered reflections and recommendations about how future research in this area might be undertaken, as indicated in the final section of this report.

For ethical considerations, we removed the journalists' and commentators' names from this report. Our intention is to address systematic uses of negative race-related social commentary due to its prevalence in mainstream media, based on our findings, rather than singling out individuals.

Part 3: Data sampling and analysis

Using the methodology described in Part 2 of this report, our team collected data over a six-month period to understand race-based reports from a data-driven, evidence-based position.

3.1 Quantitative analysis

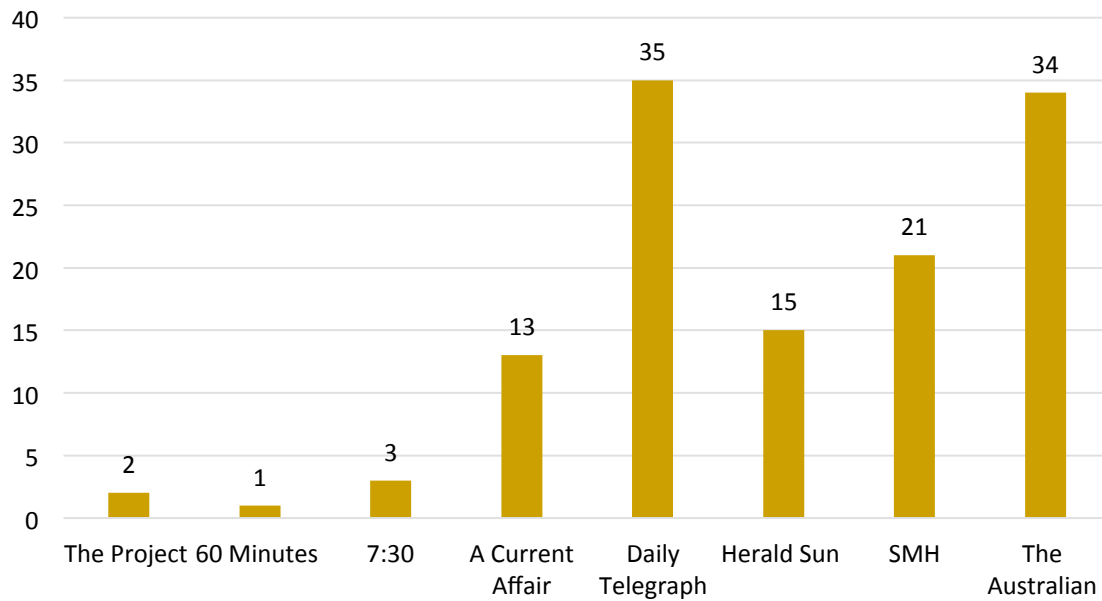
All Together Now started by asking how race is reported via opinion-based articles and current affairs programs in Australia.

To answer the research question, All Together Now sampled 124 news reports (articles and TV programs) over 26 weeks between mid-January 2017 and mid-July 2017. The quantitative analysis of data consists of finding patterns by counting and then intersecting codes, for example:

1. Count *race*
2. Count *depictions by race*
3. Count *most popular issues*
4. Combine *most popular race* with *most popular depiction* with *most popular issues*

The patterns that we established during the counting and coding phase of the analysis are illustrated in the charts below.

Chart 1: Total number of samples by media outlet



As mentioned, the research team collected data about 124 news reports and television episodes. Among the sources monitored, *Daily Telegraph* published the highest number of race-related reports (35 articles); followed by *The Australian* (34) and *Sydney Morning Herald* (21). The Nine Network's *A Current Affair* broadcasted the highest number of race-related reports (13).

Chart 2: Number of samples by media outlet and classification of race-related reporting

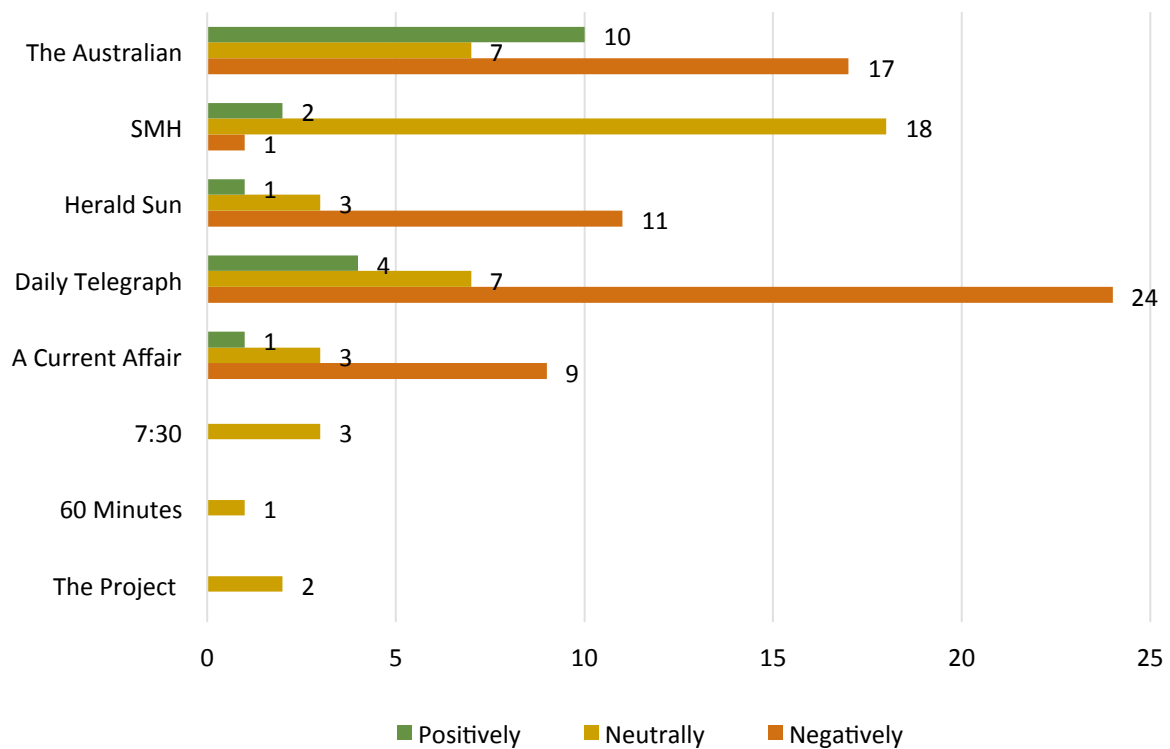


Chart 2 shows that negative portrayals of race were most often published on News Corp Australia online newspapers such as *Daily Telegraph* (24 articles), *The Australian* (17) and *Herald Sun* (11).

With 19 entries in total, the overall negative portrayals in current affairs programs (nine) are balanced by the neutral (nine) and positive (one) reports. However, *A Current Affair* broadcasted twice as many negative race-related reports than neutral ones.

Chart 3: Mentions of race in race-related reports by media outlets

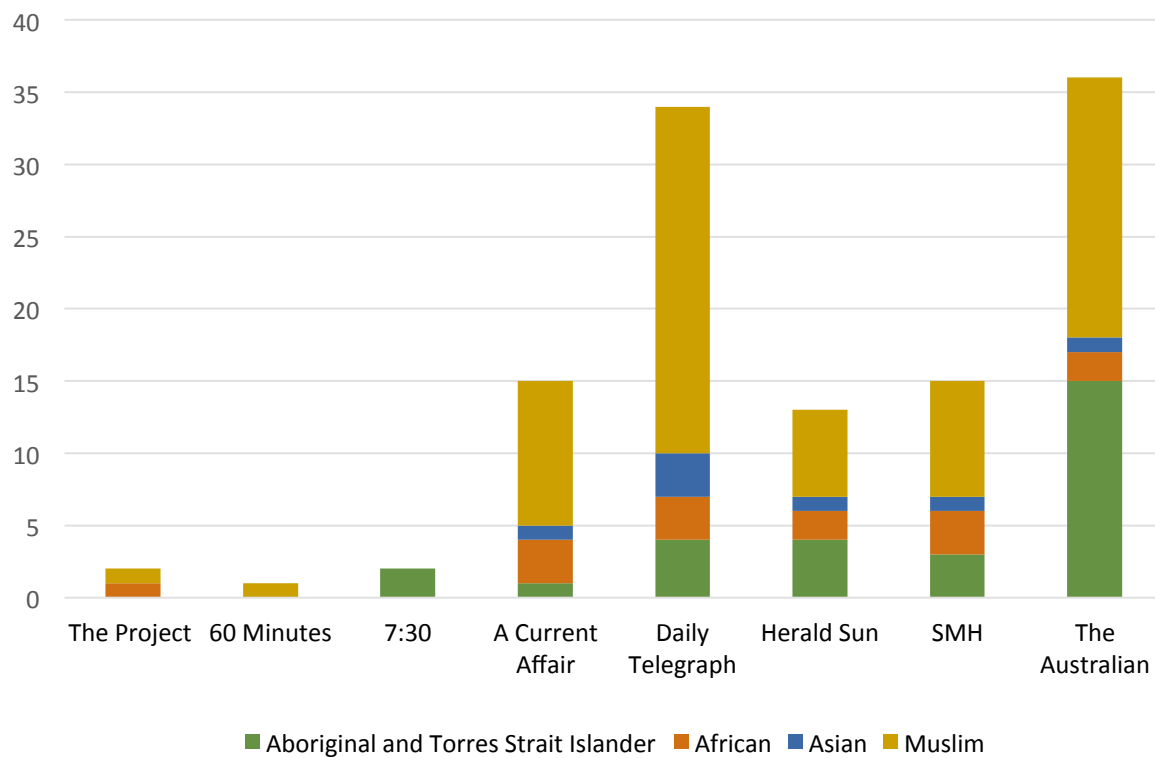
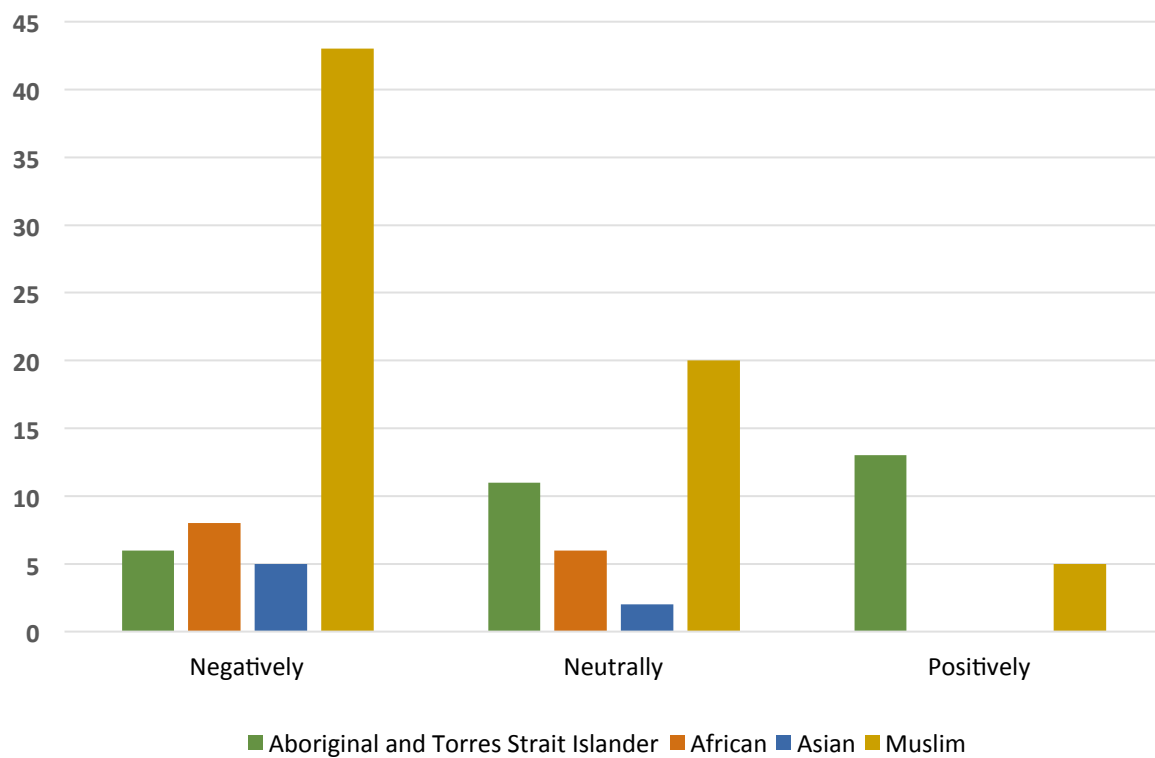
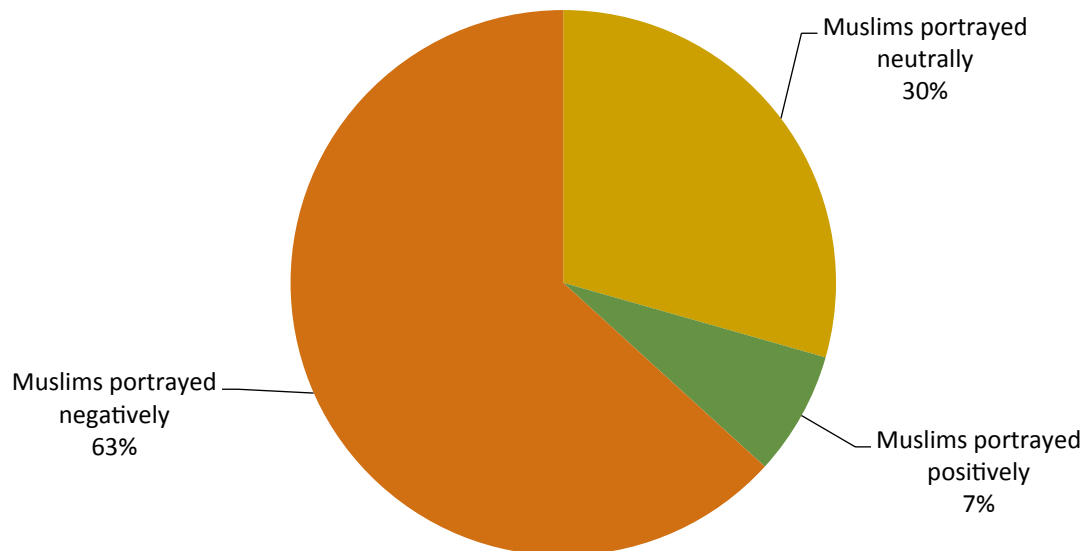


Chart 4: Portrayal of race (negative / neutral / positive)



Muslims were mentioned in 68 entries (55%), which is more than any other group mentioned during the sample period. Of those, 20 were neutral, five were positive, and 43 were negative.

Chart 5: Portrayal of Muslims



The negative reports focused on one or several of the following race-related issues:

- **Crime and violence:** 23 articles, for example, 'Love means a gun, grenade, knife and knuckle dusters',³⁶ 'Mosque mayhem'.³⁷
- **Law enforcement and national security:** 22 articles, for example, 'Terror in Manchester: open door asylum policies can lead to terror',³⁸ 'To have and to hold: the rise of bigamy in Australia'.³⁹
- **Ethnic relations and cultural customs:** 20 articles, for example, 'Forbidden love',⁴⁰ 'Handshake row',⁴¹ 'Unholy matrimony and the Islamic culture's hidden stain'.⁴²

³⁶ Blair, T., 2017. *Love means a gun, grenade, knife and knuckle dusters* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 20 July 2017].

³⁷ *A Current Affair*, 2017. *Mosque mayhem* [television program], Nine Network. Available from <https://www.9now.com.au/a-current-affair/2017/clip-cizpd5mds003e0gpm42gmo2iu> [accessed 1 March 2017].

³⁸ Murray, D., 2017. *Terror in Manchester: open door asylum policies can lead to terror* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 21 July 2017].

³⁹ Kurti, P., 2017. *To have and to hold: the rise of bigamy in Australia* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 18 January 2017].

- **National identity:** 15 articles, for example, “‘We can’t go home’: Australia must help Christian refugees persecuted by ISIS”,⁴³ ‘It shouldn’t be Australia’s job to liberalise Muslims’,⁴⁴ ‘Muslim colony proposed for Brisbane’.⁴⁵
- **Politics:** 15 articles, for example, ‘Politicians must speak honestly and openly about radical Islam’,⁴⁶ ‘Time for Turnbull to play the migration card’,⁴⁷ ‘The Left can’t handle the truth of terror’.⁴⁸
- **Immigration and refugees:** 15 articles, for example, ‘Fake refugee holidays’,⁴⁹ ‘The boats will be back under Bill Shorten, no matter his denials’.⁵⁰
- **Socio-economic issues — unemployment, housing, education, government benefits, health:** 14 articles, for example, ‘Sharia apologist’s taxpayer tour a wasteful disgrace’,⁵¹ ‘The hidden problem of Islamist radicalisation in our schools’.⁵²
- **Community matters:** 10 articles, for example, ‘Sharia apologist’s taxpayer tour a wasteful disgrace’,⁵³ ‘Pull back the curtain on a return to sexist segregation in Sydney’.⁵⁴

⁴⁰ A *Current Affair*, 2017. *Forbidden love* [television program], Nine Network. Available from <https://www.9now.com.au/a-current-affair/2017/clip-ciyo87azp00020hnpmobw9gb4> [accessed 7 February 2017].

⁴¹ A *Current Affair*, 2017. *Handshake row* [television program], Nine Network. Available from <https://www.9now.com.au/a-current-affair/2017/clip-cizdwgl2d00090hoce3it9kw0>. [accessed 22 February 2017].

⁴² Akerman, P., 2017. *Unholy matrimony and the Islamic culture’s hidden stain* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 18 January 2017].

⁴³ Devine, M., 2017. ‘We can’t go home’: Australia must help Christian refugees persecuted by ISIS [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 18 January 2017].

⁴⁴ Johns, G., 2017. *It shouldn’t be Australia’s job to liberalise Muslims* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 22 June 2017].

⁴⁵ Bolt, A., 2017. *Muslim colony proposed for Brisbane* [online], *Herald Sun*. Available from www.heraldsun.com.au [accessed 17 July 2017].

⁴⁶ Credlin, P., 2017. *Politicians must speak honestly and openly about radical Islam* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 28 March 2017].

⁴⁷ Johnson, G., 2017. *Time for Turnbull to play the migration card* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 17 July 2017].

⁴⁸ Devine, M., 2017. *The Left can’t handle the truth of terror* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 15 February 2017].

⁴⁹ A *Current Affair*, 2017. *Fake refugee holidays* [television program], Nine Network. Available from <https://www.9now.com.au/a-current-affair/2017/clip-cj2rfefg8001k0gkxv6t4mtdp> [accessed 22 May 2017].

⁵⁰ Credlin, P., 2017. *The boats will be back under Bill Shorten, no matter his denials* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 14 June 2017].

⁵¹ Devine, M., 2017. *Sharia apologist’s taxpayer tour a wasteful disgrace* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 21 February 2017].

⁵² Devine, M., 2017. *The hidden problem of Islamist radicalisation in our schools* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 22 May 2017].

⁵³ Devine, *Sharia apologist’s taxpayer tour a wasteful disgrace*.

⁵⁴ Overington, C., 2017. *Pull back the curtain on a return to sexist segregation in Sydney* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 14 June 2017].

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were the second most mentioned group, appearing in 30 entries, of which 11 were neutral, 13 were positive, and six were negative. This could indicate a lack of interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues among journalists who write opinion-based pieces for mainstream Australian newspapers, at least in comparison to Muslim-related issues. In the current affairs programs sampled, there were only three mentions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, two of them by the national broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Given that media mentions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represents a small percentage of the total sample (24%) when compared with the percentage that refer to Muslims (55%), and given the limited resources of this project, the research team decided to focus on media mentions of Muslims. These findings are outlined in Part 4 of this report.

However, the mainly neutral and positive articles about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contrasted against the mainly negative articles about Muslim people. This prompted All Together Now to question how decisions are made by social commentators and news agencies more broadly. Had this media monitoring taken place during a different six-month period, would the targeted group be different? Perhaps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders or very recent migrants from Syria or Sudan would get more attention? This indicates that news agencies and senior journalists make decisions about the ways in which they discuss groups from a racial perspective, which then affects how the public think about those groups. This, in turn, impacts how individuals and institutions treat those in these groups.

It should also be noted that, given the lack of cultural diversity among opinion-makers, particularly on TV, social commentators are largely talking about groups that they do not belong to. According to the 2016 PwC Media Outlook report, the average media employee is 27, Caucasian and male,⁵⁵ which does not reflect the current population diversity of Australia.⁵⁶ This creates a strong argument for increasing the cultural diversity of all media

⁵⁵ Brownlow, M., 2016. *Bondi hipsters are alive and well in entertainment, media and advertising* [online], *Mumbrella*. Available from <https://mumbrella.com.au/bondi-hipsters-media-entertainment-outlook-pwc-report-371575> [accessed 20 November 2017].

⁵⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017. *Census reveals a fast changing, culturally diverse nation* [online]. Available from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/Media%20Release3> [accessed 20 November 2017].

agencies to help minimise the number of individuals or groups being negatively depicted in race-related reports.

Part 4: Case study

Following the data analysis, All Together Now decided to examine one case study in detail to better understand the general trends and tropes that occurred in the data sample during the monitoring period outlined in Part 3.

The case study topic was determined using Fairclough's framework⁵⁷ to classify newspaper articles by topic and to look for trends. We discovered that 11 of the 43 negative articles and TV segments published or broadcast during the sampling period discussed Muslims in relation to a terrorist attack claimed by Daesh. The remaining 32 negative articles reported on local incidents, policies, and race and religion in general, clustering between two and four articles per topic.

Using discourse analysis, the research team focused on the 11 articles and TV segments that portrayed Muslims negatively in relation to terrorism, given this was the most substantial cluster of data that occurred during the sample period.

A detailed textual analysis has been applied to samples of research material (rather than large bodies of text)⁵⁸ to gain greater insights. The articles and segments highlighted below are illustrative of the negative racial discourse present in 62% of the data on Muslims sampled during this study.

Guided by Lopez's study,⁵⁹ the researchers identified and examined a set of tropes, listed below:

- 'Us' versus 'them'
- Western superiority
- Fear-inducing narrative: racial anxiety
- The nation state
- Islamophobia does not exist

Although the tropes contain overlapping themes, they allow us to break down commonly used negative racial content in our sample.

⁵⁷ Fairclough, *Analysing discourse*.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Lopez, *Race and economic jeopardy for all*.

‘Us’ versus ‘them’

During our sampling, we identified a recurring ‘us versus them’ rhetoric. Linguistically, this trope is not usually explicit. Upon analysis, this type of divisive rhetoric appears to imply that:

- ‘us’ represents white (or white-passing) Australians with European ancestry; while
- ‘them’ refers to people of colour, particularly recent immigrants, refugees and Muslims.

By framing the racial discussion around two groups of people, *us* (the victims) versus *them* (the perpetrators), race is hardly mentioned and racism becomes covert. In this way refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants are portrayed as a homogenous group sharing characteristics, backgrounds, motivations and economic status.⁶⁰ The sample indicates that often isolated incidents are used to generalise a culture’s negative traits. The most common fallacy is the association between terrorists and refugees. Below are two specific examples.

In an article that addresses the Westminster Bridge attack in the UK on 22 March 2017, the journalist correlates immigration in Australia with terrorism:

For more than 200 years, we have welcomed people to live in Australia and all we ask is that they leave old hatreds behind; that they work hard and join our community.⁶¹

...

Leaders who try to pretend this has nothing to do with the Islamic religion or its militaristic perversions show no leadership. [...] Have we let political correctness silence common sense? Sadly, that’s true also. Make no mistake, our enemies mean business. As we have seen time and time again — in London, Brussels, Paris, Bali, Nice, Boston, Sydney, Jakarta, Berlin, Melbourne, New York (and on it goes) — terrorists are resourceful; they adapt quickly, they choose targets of mass casualty with precision, and gutlessly favour innocents over hardened combatants.⁶²

The delimitation becomes clear between ‘us’, members of Western civilisation which ‘isn’t perfect — but it’s the best there is,’⁶³ and ‘them’, an umbrella term here for terrorists and immigrants that could be terrorists.

⁶⁰ Nolan, Mediated multiculturalism.

⁶¹ Credlin, *Politicians must speak honestly and openly about radical Islam*.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ *ibid.*

In another article, titled 'Islamists' hatred of women and gays can't be allowed to stand'⁶⁴ the journalist's generalisations do not allow for any distinction between extremists and people of Islamic faith by extrapolating extremism to a whole religion:

A religion built on hatred for more than half the human race, and for simple pleasure, cannot be allowed to stand. [...] if we are to have soldiers in the streets [...] it must be so we can all walk up the stairs out of London's Bank underground station and feel the sunshine on our faces.⁶⁵

Western superiority

The second prevalent narrative is the framing of Western socio-cultural practices as superior. Not only are Western countries and their people described in a mythical positive light, but they are contrasted with negatively-depicted cultures, who are portrayed as intruders.

In 'Stand up for the right to criticise Islam' the journalist criticises Islam through an association with terrorism. The article begins with a moderate stance:

While I completely accept that the sins of extremists should never be visited on the vast majority of moderate believers, I am increasingly uneasy about how we handle the connection between religion and extremism.⁶⁶

It then establishes the groundwork for drawing a parallel between Islam and terrorism:

Islamist terrorism has become more frequent, but criticism of the faith of Islam, and of religion in general, seems to be becoming less acceptable, as if it were equivalent to racism or blasphemy. The charge of Islamophobia is too quickly levelled.⁶⁷

It then states that:

There is a spectrum of religious belief from virtuous, individualist morality at one end, to collectivist, politicised violent terror at the other. [...] In between, though, are positions that also contain dangers, albeit more subtle ones. There are people who would not commit violence themselves, but think women should be the chattels of men, wearing of veils is mandatory and that Sharia should reign.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Dale, H., 2017. *Islamists' hatred of women and gays can't be allowed to stand* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 29 May 2017].

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Ridley, M., 2017. *Stand up for the right to criticise Islam* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 24 July 2017].

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *ibid.*

Individualism has been associated with Western societies throughout the history of ideas, including religious history.⁶⁹ The article falls short of offering nuanced reporting due to the simplistic ‘good versus bad’ framing of a complex issue.

Another method used to portray the West in a superior light is through appeals to readers’ nationalistic sentiments. Namely, terrorist attacks are described as stories of refugee families whose children disrespected their adoptive country:

... their son repaid Britain’s hospitality by detonating a [...] bomb.⁷⁰

... a British-born Muslim convert afforded every privilege of Western civilisation.⁷¹

Then the argument against refugees can be more easily made by extrapolating the attribute of one attacker to a group of innocents:

The external borders of Europe had been opened and the internal borders of Europe — under the Schengen Agreement — had been taken down already. It was the perfect storm. [...] Some people asked, ‘What if some of the people who arrive do not like us?’ They were dismissed as ‘smearing’ all the arrivals. And then Paris happened. And Cologne, and Ansbach, and Wurzburg and Nice — and people started to realise that if all the arrivals were not terrorists, then neither were they all saints.⁷²

Such scapegoating narratives are detrimental to the groups portrayed as perpetrators, whose individual identity is disregarded.

Western superiority themes can also be applied to individuals. Routine racism is a form of implicit bias, exemplified here by one commentator discussing Waleed Aly, a prominent Australian Muslim:

I appeal to Aly for two reasons. One, because he’s our most prominent Muslim, beamed into thousands of homes by Channel 10 and ABC radio. He is the ‘moderate Muslim’ so desperately sought by the political class that it has showered him with positions and awards, from a university lectureship to a board position on the Australia Council.⁷³

⁶⁹ Capps, D. & Fenn, R., 1992. *Individualism reconsidered in modern society: readings bearing on the endangered self in modern society*. Center for Religion, Self and Society. Princeton: A & A Printing.

⁷⁰ Murray, *Terror in Manchester*.

⁷¹ Devine, M., 2017. *Do-gooders complicate our defence against terrorism* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 28 March 2017].

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Bolt, A., 2017. *Time for Waleed Aly to step up and demand Islamic reform* [online], *Herald Sun*. Available from www.heraldsun.com.au [accessed 29 June 2017].

The author implies that Aly's achievements are not personal, but were offered to him by the 'political class' as a reward for his views. In this sense, the author reduces Aly's persona to his religious identity. Through the use of the 'desperately sought' syntagm the author suggests the moderate Aly is an exception in an otherwise vast conservative group of Australian Muslims.

Fear-inducing narrative: racial anxiety

The fear-inducing narrative is problematic for its use of certain words and imagery in conjunction with discussions of other races, cultures or religions that trigger negative emotional responses.

Repeated use of the negative qualifier 'creeping' in constructions such as 'creeping Sharia',⁷⁴ 'creeping Islamisation of communities'⁷⁵ or 'creeping fundamentalism'⁷⁶ label Islamic practices and create a disproportionately negative perception about Islamic people as a whole. It is not only foreign cultures that produce fear, but also domestic policies that are presented as dangerous: 'what if the immigration and integration policies [...] have set up our societies for an endless disaster?'⁷⁷ This form of strategic racism consists of crafting frames that spark racial anxiety while efficiently hiding racism from both opponents and supporters.⁷⁸

Current affairs segments that depict race negatively often use a combination of suspenseful music and imagery to induce emotional responses. For example, in a TV segment titled 'Mosque mayhem', the narrator briefly describes the news story: 'in the name of religion sickening violence on our suburban streets',⁷⁹ while showing pictures of Muslim people, and then adds: 'you can feel the tension, you can feel the threat.'⁸⁰ The narrator continues appealing to emotions to suggest the negative impact of Muslims (referred to as an 'angry army') on the community: 'But in this normally quiet suburban street honour and respect

⁷⁴ Ridley, *Stand up for the right to criticise Islam*.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Kenny, C., 2017. *Terror in Manchester: now is not the time to blame the victims* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 20 July 2017].

⁷⁷ Murray, *Terror in Manchester*.

⁷⁸ Lopez, *Race and economic jeopardy for all*.

⁷⁹ *A Current Affair, Mosque mayhem*.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

are replaced by aggression and rage.’⁸¹ The event is given magnitude through sensationalist reporting, even though it was not widely picked up by other mainstream outlets.

The fear-inducing narrative is complemented by stereotypical depictions of Muslims and it can be enhanced through one-sided interviews that do not represent the opinion of the group being discussed.

In another TV segment, called ‘Community on edge’, white Australians are interviewed about the local Muslim community, from which a member was arrested for allegedly being associated with Daesh. The overall positive attitude is in direct contrast with the suspenseful music and images of police. An older couple express their concern about Muslims and the journalist deems this to be ‘an undercurrent of ill feeling.’⁸² He continues by saying: ‘this couple were the only ones willing to speak up about their concerns,’⁸³ suggesting that people conceal their negative attitudes towards Muslims.

The format of current affairs programs in commercial networks and the manner in which they cover stories seems to confirm a lack of journalistic content, being rather a product of public relations and publicity.⁸⁴ As our sample suggests, negative coverage of ethnic minorities is also more prevalent in these networks, where current affairs segments present Muslims as a threat in Australia.

The nation state

Representations of Muslims are in some instances directly related to state policies and expressed political leanings. Immigration and refugee policies are intertwined with the war on terror narrative. The ideological significance of press representations of the nation state is obvious through the ways in which discourse about immigrants and criminals is enmeshed with war tactics discourses. In these instances, these discourses promote the need to repel objects of threat and hostility.⁸⁵

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *A Current Affair*, 2017. *Community on edge* [television program], Nine Network. Available from <https://www.9now.com.au/a-current-affair/2017/extras/latest/170309/community-on-edge> [accessed 15 March 2017].

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Phillips, Reporting diversity.

⁸⁵ Pickering, Common sense and original deviancy.

Arguments for militarising the state, using an example cited earlier, 'If we are to have soldiers in the streets [...] it must be so we can all walk up the stairs out of London's Bank underground station and feel the sunshine on our faces,'⁸⁶ could not be employed without the fear-inducing idea that society is under attack. Another example presents an isolated incident as a failure of the state to protect its citizens: 'Our immigration system, court system and senior policing policies failed us when Man Haron Monis took hostages in the Lindt café.'⁸⁷

This becomes a politicised argument and narratives of fear are used instead of statistics in arguing against state policies that do not align with certain political views. Vivid images of death (or in this case, of war) and associations with a specific situation (using the underground, going to a café) is constantly reinforced by media attention, and produces an emotional response disproportionate to the probability of an event happening.⁸⁸

For example, in the article, 'Time to get angry about Islamist terror,' a war analogy is made when praising Trump, who 'offered up the kind of moral clarity that drove the West to defeat Nazis and Soviet communists.'⁸⁹ In this context, 'moral clarity' means Trump's anti-immigration policies and 'Muslim ban'. The discussion falls again into generalisations, glorifying the West and positioning others as the enemy.

While terrorist attacks are used as arguments against Muslims entering countries such as the UK, the USA or Australia, policies that are already in place can be invoked to add another layer of racial anxiety. An article about terrorism and defence states that '500 refugees of 12,000 [...] have been identified as security risks.'⁹⁰ While this figure has not been officially confirmed,⁹¹ statistically that is 4% out of 12,000 screened refugees who posed a security risk. Although the two figures, 4% and 500 are equal here, by framing the

⁸⁶ Dale, *Islamists' hatred of women and gays can't be allowed to stand*.

⁸⁷ Albrechtsen, J., 2017. *Time to get angry about Islamist terror* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 29 May 2017].

⁸⁸ Kahneman, D., 2011. *Thinking, fast and slow*. London: Penguin Books.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Devine, M., 2017. *Do-gooders complicate our defence against terrorism*.

⁹¹ Benson, S., 2017. *Security red flag for 500 refugees* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 30 October 2017].

quantity as ‘how many’ instead of ‘what percentage’ brings a spatial representation to mind,⁹² which changes the perception of quantity.

Islamophobia does not exist

According to the Oxford dictionary, Islamophobia is a ‘dislike or a prejudice against Islam or Muslims’. Conceptually, Islamophobia is aligned with racism, homophobia, or anti-Semitism. The suffix ‘-phobia’ is of Greek origin and it means pathological or irrational fear.

One argument used by those who refuse to use the term ‘Islamophobia’ is that they are fully aware of their behaviour. Because of the prefix ‘Islam’, some argue the term does not stand under the umbrella of racism, as it refers to prejudice against a religion. Yet, as All Together Now outlines in this report’s Glossary, racism is unjust covert or overt behaviour towards a person or a group on the basis of their racial background – which includes religion.

In the data sample, denial of Islamophobia is done in various ways: simple statements, invoking the ‘religion is not race’ argument, accusing left-wing institutions of making up problems, and associating the left-wing with political correctness and its perceived negative traits.

One politicised argument points out the antagonism between mainstream Australians and so-called propaganda:

You will not hear these arguments [referring to military interventions in the Middle East as one of the causes for Islamic extremism] around the barbeques of mainstream Australia but they are ventilated daily by the public broadcasters, universities, politicians, so-called progressive media and on Twitter.⁹³

This argument frames progressive political discourse in Australia as the enemy of the common good. The stereotype of the mainstream Australian who likes barbeques seems to be aimed at audiences who can easily identify themselves with the protagonist.

⁹² Kahneman, *Thinking, fast and slow*.

⁹³ Kenny, *Terror in Manchester*.

The otherness of progressives, who side with the alleged 'enemy' is also expressed through formulations such as, 'their invented term of Islamophobia'⁹⁴ or 'the usual leftists on our ABC's Q&A program were busy downplaying the threat of terrorism'⁹⁵ for ideological ends.

A reductionist narrative is employed when commentators criticise certain state policies towards people of Muslim faith. This can be seen in phrases such as 'lethal culture of Muslim victimhood' and 'apologists who turn terrorist attacks into debates on how the West was asking for it.'⁹⁶ Once formulated as such, the argument is black and white, and it becomes easy to claim that Muslims are perpetrators, and Westerners are victims. This way the complex causes of terrorism and state-level attempts to tackle the issue are avoided. The formulation draws attention to the dramatic details of each terrorist attack, where the immediate players are the terrorists and the victims. It then becomes easy to label attempts of explaining terrorism in context as unsympathetic towards the people who died in the attacks.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁵ Devine, M., 2017, *Downplaying the threat of terrorism makes us all sitting ducks* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 10 June 2017].

⁹⁶ Bolt, *Time for Waleed Aly to step up and demand Islamic reform*.

Part 5: Media regulations

In response to the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses outlined in Part 3 and Part 4 respectively, the research team investigated a range of different bodies to find out the options for reporting racism in the media.

A number of bodies have guidelines and codes of conduct in place, some of which are binding, with each relating to a different aspect of the media. While each of these seek to reduce forms of discrimination in the media, they vary in their effectiveness in doing so.

Issues arise in that these guidelines and codes can be interpreted differently and as such many news agencies publish or broadcast racist commentary with impunity. Covert racism is particularly problematic, as it is much more difficult to detect, and is not covered by most guidelines and codes. Consequently, complaints about covert racism in the media are unlikely to be addressed.

Further, it is unclear whether some racist opinion-based reports might constitute a breach, as most regulators take into consideration the tone and context used to discuss race.

For most of these guidelines and codes, the timeframe in which breaches can be reported is short, usually a matter of weeks. Processing times are often lengthy. This limits the complainant in reporting breaches and makes it much more difficult to regulate them.

The 2012 Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulation similarly found that it can sometimes take a long time for code administrators to respond with an outcome to a complaint, and made recommendations on how this could be improved.⁹⁷ The inquiry recommended that a new, government-funded statutory body, the News Media Council, be formed to handle complaints made by the public about news coverage on all platforms (including online for the first time), thereby replacing the Australian Press Council (APC; as outlined below). However, the government decided not to adopt the inquiry's recommendations.

⁹⁷ Finkelstein, H. & Ricketson, M., 2012. *Report of the independent Inquiry into the media and media regulation*. Report to the minister for broadband, communications and the digital economy, Canberra.

5.1 The Australian Press Council

The APC is a voluntary membership body for Australian newspapers, magazines and associated digital outlets that responds to complaints.

There are three major elements within the APC principles that deal specifically with the reporting of race, particularly in relation to asylum seekers, religious terms and race more generally.

5.1.1 'Asylum seekers', 'illegal immigrants' and entry without a visa

The APC uses these terms differently depending on the legality of the person entering Australia. They state that 'great care must be taken to avoid describing people who arrived by boat without a visa in terms that are likely to be inaccurate or unfair in relation to at least some of them', and therefore that 'depending on the specific context, terms such as "illegal immigrants" or "illegals" might constitute a breach of the council's standards of practice on these grounds.'⁹⁸ They recommend the term 'asylum seeker' be used instead.

5.1.2 Religious terms in headlines

The use of religious terms in headlines is problematic, given a headline's purpose is to capture the essence of a news article succinctly. This can leave some words open to (mis)interpretation. It is problematic when headlines associate entire religious groups with certain actions, particularly in relation to terrorism. 'The use of the words "Islam", "Islamic" and "Muslim" in headlines on reports of terrorist attacks has caused problems both for the Muslim community in Australia and the Australian media. It is important for newspapers to identify as clearly as possible the sources of terror; casting the net of suspicion and accusation too widely can be harmful.'⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Australian Press Council, 2011. 'Asylum seekers', 'illegal immigrants' and entry without a visa [online]. Available from <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/document-search/asylum-seekers/?LocatorGroupID=662&LocatorFormID=677&FromSearch=1> [accessed 10 October 2017].

⁹⁹ Australian Press Council, 2004. *Guideline: Religious terms in headlines* [online]. Available from <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/document-search/guideline-religious-terms/> [accessed 10 October 2017].

5.1.3 Reporting of race

In the reporting of race, the APC acknowledges the difficulty of assessing breaches as it 'has found that the tone and context of such reporting are usually the crucial elements in deciding whether its principles have been breached.'¹⁰⁰ The Council's principles state:

Publications should not place gratuitous emphasis on the race, religion, nationality, colour, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness, or age of an individual or group. Where it is relevant and in the public interest, publications may report or express opinions in these areas.¹⁰¹

In reporting breaches, a complaint can be made directly to the APC and does not need to be made to the publication first. The complaint generally needs to be submitted within 30 days of publication. The complainant must fill out a form online. This is then investigated by the APC and they state that 'many complaints result in a correction, apology or some other form of action being taken due to the involvement of council staff.'¹⁰²

5.2 Broadcasting Services Act (1992)

The Broadcasting Services Act is aimed at all television and radio broadcasters in Australia. Section 123 of the Broadcasting Services Act states:

A licensee must not broadcast a program which in all of the circumstances ... is likely to incite hatred against, or serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, any person or group of persons because of age, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual preferences, religion, transgender status or disability.¹⁰³

Breaches must be reported first to the relevant broadcaster. Following this, a complaint can be made to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), which can be accessed online. If a breach is identified, ACMA can 'take enforcement action to ensure future compliance.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² Australian Press Council, 2011. *Handling of complaints* [online]. Available from <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/handling-of-complaints/> [accessed 10 October 2017].

¹⁰³ Commercial Radio Australia, 2011. *Codes of practice and guidelines* [online]. Available from http://www.acma.gov.au/~media/Broadcasting%20Investigations/Information/pdf/commercial_radio-codes_and_guidelines_5sept2011%20pdf.pdf [accessed 10 October 2017].

¹⁰⁴ Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2016. *Broadcasting content regulation* [online]. Available from <http://www.acma.gov.au/theACMA/About/The-ACMA-story/Regulating/broadcasting-content-regulation-television-acma> [accessed 11 October 2017].

5.3 FreeTV Australia (formerly known as Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations)

FreeTV Australia is aimed at any free-to-air television broadcaster. Sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 of the code state:

A licensee must not broadcast any program, program promotion, community service announcement or station ID which is likely, in all the circumstances, to provoke or perpetuate in, or by a reasonable person, intense dislike, serious contempt or severe ridicule against a person or group of people because of age, colour, gender, national or ethnic origin, disability, race, religion or sexual preference.¹⁰⁵

However:

A licensee will not be in breach of clause 2.6.2 if the relevant conduct is said or done reasonably and in good faith: a) in broadcasting an artistic work (including comedy or satire); b) in the course of any broadcast with a public interest purpose (including a statement, discussion or debate concerning academic, artistic or scientific matters); or c) in the course of a broadcast of a fair report of, or fair comment on, a matter of public interest.¹⁰⁶

The code also states that:

Very mild coarse language considered socially offensive or discriminatory may only be used infrequently when absolutely justified by the story line or program context.¹⁰⁷

To report a breach of the code, the relevant broadcaster must be contacted within 30 days of the broadcast. The broadcaster then has 30 working days to respond, and if the complainant is dissatisfied, they can escalate their complaint to ACMA.

5.4 Commercial Radio Australia (formerly known as Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters or FARB)

Commercial Radio Australia is aimed at all commercial radio broadcasters within Australia. A licensee must not broadcast a program which:

is likely to incite in a reasonable listener, hatred against, or serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, any person or group of persons because of age, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual preferences, religion, transgender status or disability.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Free TV Australia, 2015. *Commercial television industry code of practice* [online]. Available from http://www.freetv.com.au/media/Code_of_Practice/Free_TV_Commercial_Television_Industry_Code_of_Practice_2015.pdf [accessed 11 October 2017].

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Commercial Radio Australia, 2016. *Code and complaints* [online]. Available from <http://www.commercialradio.com.au/code-complaints> [accessed 10 October 2017].

Breaches must be reported first to the relevant broadcaster. Following this, a complaint can be made to ACMA, which can be accessed online. If a breach is identified, ACMA can 'take enforcement action to ensure future compliance.'¹⁰⁹

5.5 Independent Media Council of Australia

The Independent Media Council of Australia (IMC) applies to publications governed by West Australian Newspapers Limited and Pacific Magazines Proprietary Limited.

Only one principle in the IMC's guidelines specifically relates to race, stating that:

... reports should not refer to personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability, or mental illness, unless they are relevant.¹¹⁰

Complaints must be made to the IMC in writing after which 'the IMC will endeavour to resolve the issue by conciliation within two days or such longer period as might be necessary, not exceeding seven days.'¹¹¹

5.6 Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance

The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) Journalist Code of Ethics covers any journalist who is a member of the MEAA. They have no jurisdiction outside of union members and journalists choose to be bound by these principles.

The MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics states that journalists should not put:

... unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability.¹¹²

All complaints against journalists should be submitted in writing to the MEAA. They are then assessed by the complaints board who strictly follow the process, and:

¹⁰⁹ Australian Communications and Media Authority, *Broadcasting content regulation*.

¹¹⁰ Independent Media Council, 2012. *The Independent Media Council guidelines* [online]. Available from <http://www.independentmediacouncil.com.au/about.html> [accessed 16 November 2017].

¹¹¹ *ibid*.

¹¹² Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, 2012. *MEAA journalist code of ethics* [online]. Available from <https://www.meaa.org/about-us/journalists-code-of-ethics/> [accessed 17 October 2017].

... upon completing its investigation, the complaints panel decides by a majority vote whether the complaint is upheld or dismissed. If upheld, it will also decide by majority vote on the penalty to be imposed.¹¹³

¹¹³ *ibid.*

Part 6: Regulatory breaches

In an assessment of the regulations set out by various governing bodies within Australia and summarised in Part 5, All Together Now identified breaches in the sample collected for the *Who Watches the Media?* report between mid-January and mid-July 2017.

The 62 negatively race-based reports found during the six-month sample period express racist views through their title, content, a picture, and/or tone of voice. Therefore, All Together Now considers that these 62 articles and TV segments potentially contravene one or more of the codes of conduct. A number of examples are detailed in this part of the report.

Most of the potential breaches were subject to the APC's principles and demonstrate examples of overt racism perpetrated by the highest-rated online current affairs TV programs and newspapers in Australia.

The APC principles states that:

... publications should not place gratuitous emphasis on the race, religion, nationality, colour, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, illness, or age of an individual or group.¹¹⁴

Articles sampled from *Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun* and *The Australian* explicitly breached this principle in portrayals of Islam and Muslims, but also in reference to asylum seekers and other recent immigrants. Based on qualitative analysis and the APC principles, a number of issues became apparent:

- Repeatedly referring to Muslims as 'others' can alienate communities and generate stereotypes (for example, 'Stand up for the right to criticise Islam'¹¹⁵).
- Bringing up terrorism in an unrelated discussion about education and cultural values urges people to take action against a falsely perceived threat of Islam (for example, 'The real danger is not militant Islam but the enemy within'¹¹⁶).

¹¹⁴ Australian Press Council, *Guideline: Religious terms in headlines*.

¹¹⁵ Ridley, *Stand up for the right to criticise Islam*.

¹¹⁶ Bolt, A., 2017. *The real danger is not militant Islam but the enemy within* [online], *Herald Sun*. Available from www.heraldsun.com.au [accessed 7 March 2017].

- Painting Muslims as a uniform group is damaging as it does not give a voice to the individuals within this group, nor their beliefs and values (for example, 'Time for Waleed Aly to step up and demand Islamic reform'¹¹⁷).
- Linking Islam to terrorism by depicting a number of terrorist attacks and then urging the reader to take political action against the religion as a whole rather than the individual perpetrators. No terrorist attacks by any other race or religion are put forward and as such gratuitous emphasis is placed on Islam. This is not relevant or in the public interest. Evidently the emphasis being placed on Islam in unnecessary contexts leads to discriminatory attitudes being accepted within society (for example, 'Politically correct leaders looking for somewhere to hide'¹¹⁸).
- Unnecessary use of racial adjectives in relation to crime and violence leads to stereotyping and vilification of ethnic communities (for example, 'Two Sudanese on bail invade another home'¹¹⁹ and 'Be warned: PC cops give rise to fear and loathing'¹²⁰).
- Headlines that problematise Muslim communities in Australia (for example, 'Terror in Manchester: open door asylum policies can lead to terror'¹²¹ and 'Refujihad here as traitors return with plans to kill us'¹²²).

Articles such as 'Pull back the curtain on a return to sexist segregation in Sydney'¹²³ and 'Just what is the ASIO boss smoking'¹²⁴ that referred to Islam as a threat to Australia but did not make this explicit through the headline would not be penalised under the APC code.

Although some reports demonstrate examples of overt racism, they do not explicitly breach the codes. Many of the codes seem to overlap and cover the same areas (primarily being gratuitously placing emphasis on or including race or religion and referencing it in irrelevant contexts). This establishes significant gaps in the existing codes and enables the media to

¹¹⁷ Bolt, *Time for Waleed Aly to step up and demand Islamic reform*.

¹¹⁸ Oriel, J., 2017. *Politically correct leaders looking for somewhere to hide* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 29 June 2017].

¹¹⁹ Bolt, A., 2017. *Two Sudanese on bail invade another home* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 22 May 2017].

¹²⁰ Devine, M., 2017. *Be warned: PC cops give rise to fear and loathing* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 24 July 2017].

¹²¹ Kenny, *Terror in Manchester*.

¹²² Oriel, J., 2017. *Refujihad here as traitors return with plans to kill us* [online], *The Australian*. Available from www.theaustralian.com.au [accessed 22 May 2017].

¹²³ Overington, *Pull back the curtain on a return to sexist segregation in Sydney*.

¹²⁴ Devine, M., 2017. *Just what is the ASIO boss smoking* [online], *Daily Telegraph*. Available from www.dailytelegraph.com.au [accessed 5 June 2017].

continue to publish articles both overtly and covertly racist. In doing so, the media is perpetuating negative stereotypes that increase the prevalence of discrimination against minority groups in Australia, as evidenced in Part 1.

Of great concern to All Together Now is the ways in which social media is used by audiences to amplify stories that contravene these codes. The increase in social media use over the past decade has increased the reach and impact of opinion pieces and social commentary, as sometimes they are widely shared and discussed in the public domain. Discussions on social media can be more hostile compared with face-to-face discussion, given people can hide their identity.¹²⁵ The ability for people to share racist stories is likely to increase negative impacts on targeted communities.

¹²⁵ Whittaker, E. & Kowalski, R. M., 2015. Cyberbullying via social media, *Journal of school violence*, 14 (1).

Part 7: Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen media regulations in relation to race-based reporting

Media codes of conduct are generally voluntary and often do not result in any retractions, penalties or changes being made.¹²⁶ This is problematic, given the impact that negative race-related reports have on the ways in which people view targeted minority groups. Yet they provide a means by which audiences can make a complaint, and for this reason it is recommended that the codes of conduct are strengthened to better facilitate the complaints process.

Covert racism to be covered in codes of conduct

Media regulations that focus on racism generally cover overt forms of racism, but fail to cover subtle forms such as perpetuating negative stereotypes. The common understanding of racism covers a range of behaviours that unfairly target people based on their race, nationality, cultural background and/or religion. Given that the definition of racism changes over time to reflect social norms, codes of conduct need to be updated regularly to ensure definitions are current and relevant.

Indefinite timelines for audience complaints

The report findings indicate that the timeframe in which audiences can make a complaint about a news report is too short. The increase in social media use over the past decade has increased the reach of opinion pieces and social commentary, as they are widely shared and discussed in the public domain. When a negative race-related report is shared in this way, the likelihood for negative impacts on the targeted group is amplified.

Therefore, given the ubiquity and semi-permanence of online news, the current 30-day complaints window under some codes is too short. It is recommended that the codes reflect this contemporary, online reality by enabling audiences to make a report about any news article at any point in time.

¹²⁶ Finkelstein, H. & Ricketson, *Report of the independent inquiry*.

Speed up responses to audience complaints

The 2012 Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Media and Media Regulations¹²⁷ noted that it can sometimes take a long time for code administrators to respond with an outcome to a complaint. It is recommended that the codes reflect the modern environment of online reporting of news by significantly speeding up the process of reporting so that news reports that contravene the codes are removed from the public sphere rapidly, thereby reducing the harm that they inflict on individuals and communities.

Recommendation 2: Support journalists to discuss race sensitively

All Together Now recommends that news agencies hire more culturally diverse journalists, and provide training, mentoring and racially sensitive editorial policies and practices for all journalists and social commentators.

It also recommends that journalism educators support future journalists and social commentators through education that focuses on reporting culturally and racially diverse stories in sensitive ways.

Training for journalists and students

Reporting Islam is an award-winning project based at Griffith University that provides information and training for journalists on how to write reports about Islam and Muslims in a respectful and evidence-based way. *Reporting Islam* has produced a smartphone app, handbook, training guide and website for journalists (see <https://reportingislam.org/>).¹²⁸ This enables practising and student journalists to consider the social impacts of their work.

Between 2015 and 2017, the *Reporting Islam* project trained almost 1000 journalists, journalism students and educators in best practice approaches to reporting stories about Muslims. Data collected before and after the training reveal that the training significantly improved participants' knowledge in relation to Muslims and their faith, and in best practice approaches to reporting news stories that involve Muslims.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Reporting Islam: international best practice for journalists*, Griffith University. Available from <https://www.griffith.edu.au/learning-futures/projects-and-partnerships/reporting-islam> [accessed 14 November 2017].

Workshops and mentoring for journalists

It is now widely recognised that diversity in the workforce has many benefits for businesses.¹²⁹ However, as recently highlighted by Media Diversity Australia (MDA), most of the media landscape does not reflect the diversity on our streets,¹³⁰ and this needs to change so that all Australian media audiences are regarded as valued members of society. The not-for-profit organisation seeks to encourage CALD Australians to view journalism as a realistic and sustainable career choice.

In 2018, MDA will roll out workshops across the country after the success of their Diversity, Debate and Disruption round tables that were held in Sydney in 2017. MDA will also soon provide a mentoring program to ensure the next wave of CALD journalists have access to senior journalists who can support and guide them with their careers. This approach seeks to challenge the structural barriers and Anglo-centric nature of many media outlets in Australia.

Ensure editorial policies are racially aware

Journalists are generally required to follow their news agencies' policies, and these can be racially biased.¹³¹ Editors must be mindful that their editorial policies might generalise or stereotype large groups of people based on their race, religion or nationality and that this can affect the long-term health and wellbeing of targeted populations.¹³² Editors must take steps to change their policies and practices to address the adverse social impacts of negative race-related reports. This will enable journalists and social commentators to produce unbiased commentary, and make bigotry more difficult for the minority of journalists who continue to prioritise racially-motivated sensationalism over evidence-based commentary.

¹²⁹ Rock, D. & Grant, H., 2016. *Why diverse teams are smarter* [online], *Harvard Business Review*. Available from <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter> [accessed 14 November 2017].

¹³⁰ Media Diversity Australia, 2017. *Who tells the news matters* [video recording]. Available from <https://www.facebook.com/MediaDiversityAustralia/videos/377706639347915/> [accessed 14 November 2017].

¹³¹ Yusuf, I., 2017. *Forced error: Aly and allies move against deliberate ignorance in newsrooms* [online]. Available from <https://www.crikey.com.au/2017/11/01/new-diversity-body-aims-to-remove-narrowcasting-in-newsrooms/comment-page-2/> [accessed 14 November 2017].

¹³² Jacobs, *We're sick of racism, literally*.

Recommendation 3: Continue media monitoring and analysis

Unless the media industry — including regulators, editors, and journalists — are held accountable for negative race-based reports, they will continue to perpetuate racist stereotypes and adversely influence the public's attitudes towards some sections of the Australian community.

There remains a need for ongoing monitoring and analysis of race-based reports. Audience ratings and other statistics on digital and traditional media outlets are published regularly, so further research could monitor and analyse a refined selection of news sources.

This would be strengthened by research into the social impact of race-related reports on targeted communities. Studying which reports are widely spread, and the ways in which audiences react to frequently shared opinion-based news, would offer new insights from an audience perspective.

To protect the environment, All Together Now has chosen not to provide printed copies of this report.

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