

Josephine Cashman

Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED Fwd: Questions re: Letter 260120

1 message

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Fri, Jan 31, 2020 at 4:47 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **James Taylor =**

Date: Wed, 29 Jan. 2020, 19:13

Subject: Re: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED Fwd: Questions re: Letter 260120

To: Josephine Cashman

Good evening Ms Cashman,

Thank you for contacting my office. This email serves as confirmation that I have received your correspondence and will deal with your complaint in keeping with our established processes.

Regards,

James Taylor

On 29 Jan 2020, at 18:41, Josephine Cashman wrote:

Without Prejudice

Mr James Taylor
Managing Director
SBS Corporation (and NITV)

Dear Managing Director,

My name is Josephine Cashman and I support a united Australia. I have experienced hatred can never solve Aboriginal disadvantage. I am a Warrimay woman from the mid north coast of New South Wales, a lawyer, businesswoman, orator, media commentator and managing director of the Big River group. I was an inaugural member of Prime Minister, Tony Abbott's Indigenous Advisory Council and served as the Chair of its *Safe Communities* Committee until 2017. I sit on the Board of the Reconciliation Working Group, Google Australia and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. I have appeared on SBS representing Aboriginal people on many occasions and on *Insight* once. I am committed to serving the *voiceless* Aboriginal people *on the ground* in consultation with their elders and traditional owners.

PLEASE NOTE: *I have copied many elder and traditional owners into the emails attached including: Yuin, the Victorian Boonawong traditional owners, Tasmanian communities and other groups who have expressed they have been offended by the misrepresentation of Aboriginal culture, history and false Aboriginal ancestry claims. Kindly protect their names and do not forward correspondence to NITV and/or others with their email addresses attached please. This would be a breach of their privacy.*

I wish to lodge a formal complaint about the dishonest and possible illegal behaviour of many SBS and NITV journalists who support Bruce Pascoe, particularly Jack Lattimore and Julie Nimo. The journalists

involved in Indigenous reporting on both networks have behaved disrespectfully towards me and they have misrepresented the facts on many occasions (which is illegal). It is relevant to acknowledge the fact SBS and NITV journalists have a legal obligation to ensure their reports are fair, balanced and accurate. Unfortunately SBS and NITV have failed to uphold this principle which is reflected in the content of their reports on Bruce Pascoe and his publications and especially in my objections and involvement. I remind you, I am representing my people *on the ground*. Much of the misreporting has been libellous and it has been so bad, I am considering taking legal action.

A factual account of my involvement can be found on my Facebook account. I have provided evidence with a family friend, Terry Yumbulul contacted me and offered to make a contribution because he was disturbed by the misrepresentation (of Yolngu culture) reflected in the Pascoe books and in his ancestry claim. Many Aboriginal elders and traditional owners are disturbed by it, especially Pascoe's misrepresentation of our unique spiritual inheritance. Yet none of the elders and traditional owners I am in communication with has been interviewed or taken seriously by your networks. This is a serious oversight and an insult to the Australian people who contribute to the funding of your networks. I helped Terry write the letter at his request. I remind you politicians, the PM, government Ministers, business leaders, writers, probably yourself and others enjoy that privilege! You will see text and email evidence of Terry's corrections (sometimes his wife). The letter is addressed to the Australian people and it was published on Australia Day. The letter shares the spiritual nature of Yolngu culture which your journalists have shamefully undermined and distorted by making irrelevant accusations. It is a letter and not an academic paper. I have received support for its content and I shared it with the supporting elders and traditional owners before its publication. Cultural knowledge belongs to the Yolngu people and I had permission to write about it.

The journalists involved in the biased reporting have made offensive accusations and they have insulted many Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people. As distinguished, The cultural knowledge shared in the Australia Day letter belongs to the Yolngu people and it was shared with the Australian people. It is not an academic paper. The letter also points to the fact it would be impossible for Aboriginal agriculture to have been practised before British settlement, without the aid of animals and the letter contains quotes from the Ken Wyatt and Ms Langton (no assumptions) who support Pascoe's books and identity claim. Your journalists have overlooked the relevance of the content contained in the letter because of their ideological approach to journalism. However I do not care to focus on the beautiful letter, rather to reaffirm the fact, nothing *underhanded* has taken place (see Facebook page shots). I do not want to condemn Terry either because I know what has occurred and it is common in Aboriginal domains, especially when ideology and/or hatred dominates. I request your network remove misrepresentations of the facts from its network immediately please.

Can you imagine an indigenous Australian animal capable of being penned in a back yard? Imagine containing a kangaroo, emu, wallaby, koala bear and/or other indigenous marsupials? What materials would have been used to build silos, houses, yards and fences? What indigenous animal is capable of ploughing the land? I am having difficulty imagining a dingo harnessed to a plough (note: experts debate whether dingos are in fact indigenous. I will leave it to them to resolve.) Seriously, it is absurd to make such claims without supporting archaeological and/or anthropological evidence.

Unfortunately it would appear many Australians are not aware of the fact there were no hoofed animals on this sacred land before the First Fleet arrived. The eleven strong fleet stopped at South Africa to collect hoofed animals on the way to Australia. This fact means no sheep, goats, horses, donkeys, cows, buffalo, camels, pigs, cattle etc lived here before British settlement. There is no archeological and/or anthropological evidence of Aboriginal agriculture and eminent historians including Professor Geoffrey Blainey have written books and articles proving Pascoe has misrepresented precious explorer records. Many of these historians and scholars have been interviewed on Foxtel about it. I emphasise, Aboriginal people are proud of our hunter and gatherer heritage. It is embedded in our creation stories and cultural inheritance. Our people did not need wells to store water because our rivers, creeks and waterways were pure to drink from, imagine that! I understand it is difficult for many to imagine Australia before the British arrived. This event changed our landscape and culture forever, in ways many contemporary Australians appear not to consider valid. It has been proven hundreds of indigenous fruits, berries, veggies, roots and other eatable plants are now extinct and obviously lantana, blackberry and other forest plant pests have been introduced! This is one reason why the explorer records, especially the native species drawings and descriptions of Joseph Banks and others are valuable and treasured documents. Historical facts should never be allowed to be distorted or disrespected regardless of bitter feelings associated with the arrival of the British. The fact is, the European arrival (or invasion) was inevitable and as we know, the French were only a day or two behind Captain Cook.

When Australia dismisses the value of recorded historical facts such as precious explorer diaries and the Joseph Banks drawings and written entries, we are in trouble. Aboriginal inheritance has been recorded differently. Our inheritance has been transmitted by word of mouth and passed from generation to generation during ceremonies. Of course our history is precious. Our histories/stories are found in our unique creation stories, in our body painting images (now translated to bark and canvas), in our sacred and secret ceremonies which pass culture from generation to generation, in our songlines, our songs,

our dances, etched into our sacred objects and in our rock art etcetera. There is no evidence of Aboriginal agriculture to be found there. Of course our people used sophisticated technologies such as fish traps, spears and boomerangs, baskets for storing grain and other specialities, temporary shelters, canoes, clothing and the like. It takes a long time to grind a stone by hand to make a sharp edge. It takes a long time to reach a destination on foot and it takes exceptional skill to kill for food without causing unnecessary pain for the animal, etcetera. I am proud of my Aboriginal hunter gatherer inheritance and I am especially proud of the Aboriginal spiritual relationship with our ancient land. My people preserved this ancient land and lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years. The exact number of years is likely to change as scientists make new discoveries however the new discoveries do not change the facts, rather the fact respond to new evidence. Where is Pascoe's evidence of his changes to history and culture?

I expect our Aboriginal media group to uphold the facts and debates relevant to Aboriginal people. It not acceptable to promote and defend misrepresentations of the facts and/or for to promote one side of a story. I expect the Indigenous media to care about the disfunction our people endure *on the ground*, has anyone reported on water shortages, overcrowded housing and the cost of fresh food in Wilcannia lately? I expect the Aboriginal media to report fairly, in a balanced manner as is its legal duty. Our people deserve to be offered facts and hatred will never solve problems.

I look to leaders like Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) and others for inspiration. Mandela put aside his grievances and made peace with his oppressors. There is a famous story about Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) who insisted a Hindu follower who had killed a Muslim family to repent by raising the deceased father's surviving child as a Muslim, in his Hindu household without bias. Mother Teresa (1910-1997) was a Catholic nun who devoted her life to serving the poor. She spent many years in Calcutta, India and in 1979 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2016 she was canonised, Saint Teresa. I hold special regard for Eddie Mabo (1936-1992) who has left our people with a special legacy will be indebted to receive and I hold a special place in my heart for my ancestors whose ancestral memories I respect and honour.

Why has a request for Aboriginal ancestry evidence turned into an untouchable domain? This should be a subject worthy of debate. In case you are not aware, reports of Aboriginal ancestry misrepresentations occur daily and a growing number of Aboriginal people *on the ground* are upset. Their *voices* are rarely heard. I often receive complaints. Where can my people *on the ground* go to for support? I have called for a congress comprised of Aboriginal elders, traditional owners, experts and others to come together to make recommendations to the government about solving this growing problem. I have identified the fact Canada, the USA, Sweden and Norway have taken action on indigenous identity but I have not made recommendations, as has been incorrectly reported. It is the responsibility of a congress (or similar) to make recommendations. Why is the Indigenous media not interested in issues affecting my people *on the ground*? Why is it not supporting rational and informed debate?

To date Pascoe has been unable to provide evidence of his Aboriginal ancestry. It should never be considered controversial to request him (or others) to do so, especially given the context of disfunction *on the ground* in our communities. Pascoe (and others) are benefiting financially. Of course there is a link between community disfunction and the misrepresentation of facts. Pascoe has changed his story many times (documented and can be provided) and a professional ancestry researcher has proven his ancestors were born in England. Pascoe has changed his story each time new evidence has been presented to him (evidence can be provided). It is one thing to claim Aboriginal ancestry without being able to substantiate it, it is yet another to attempt to change our ancient and sacred Aboriginal spiritual cultural inheritance. If you are not aware, Pascoe has admitted to *stealing* the content of *Dark Emu* from a gaoled terrorist, now deceased (this fact can be provided).

There are a growing number of Aboriginal elders and traditional owners who are disturbed by the fact *Young Dark Emu* is being distributed to pre schools and primary schools. Although this distribution is not the responsibility of the Indigenous media, I expect it to at least examine the claims made in the book addressed to young children. At least the Indigenous media should be obliged to allow debate without misrepresenting those who oppose its distribution. This is a democracy where all voices deserve to be heard. I have written to the federal Minister for Education (and the Minister for Communications) requesting Pascoe's claims be examined. I intend lobbying the relevant State education and communication ministers. The first federal education minister reply letter states it has referred my letter to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs who supports Pascoe and his books! I have replied to the ministerial letter inviting the education minister to consider the fact all educational content should be his responsibility.

I posed the questions, '*What happens when education books misrepresenting non Aboriginal Australian settler history are distributed to Australian school children and you receive a complaint? Which minister would you refer it to? Who is responsible for examining complaints about content being taught in Australian schools?*' I am confused because changing Aboriginal history is not solely a matter concerning Aboriginal people. It is a matter concerning all Australian school students (and people). Surely changes to Aboriginal cultural inheritance need to be covered by the Indigenous media,

rather than it dismissing objections then producing biased and unbalanced reports (often libellous) which cover only one side of the story.

Australia can do better than this. It is not responsible behaviour for the government to feed information to innocent children which has not been validated with evidence. I do not want Australian children growing up believing in histories which have not been weighed by factual evidence. If a theory cannot be supported with factual evidence, it should not be considered educational.

I would appreciate your immediate attention please.

Yours sincerely,

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jodan Perry** <jodan.perry@sbs.com.au>

Date: Mon, Jan 27, 2020 at 6:08 PM

Subject: Questions re: Letter 260120

To: jcashman@brii.com.au

Hello Josephine,

Could you please answer these questions for NITV News

1. Do you have an original copy of the letter written by Terry Yumbulul that was published by the Herald Sun on Sunday 26/01/20
2. If so, are you able to provide the original to NITV News
3. Are you the author of this letter

We will be publishing an article in one hour

Thank you

<image001.png>

Jodan Perry

Worimi / Wiradjuri

Senior Producer – News & Current Affairs

jodan.perry@sbs.com.au

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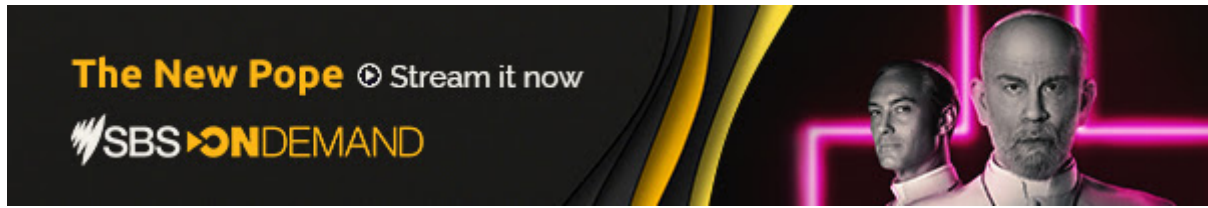
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SBS acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia.



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Josephine Cashman

Chair, Big River Impact Foundation,

<http://bigriverfoundation.com.au/>

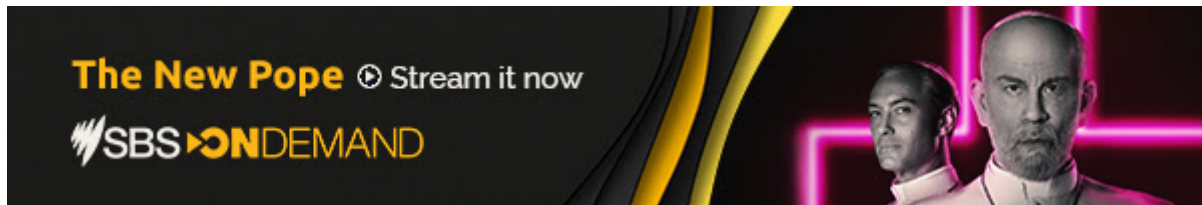
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2 attachments

