



The Prime Minister of Australia

The Hon. Tony Abbott, MP.

Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Hon Prime Minister,

RE: Proposed Changes to Australia's Racial Vilification Laws by the Abbott Government.

Firstly, I would like to introduce myself:

I am the President of the African Community Organisation of South Australia established and incorporated in 1987. I, as many of African people came to Australia as a professional. Many of us arrived quite recently as refugees. Hence, the population has grown since my arrival in 1979. I have lived in Australia with an open mind aware of racial vilification, as do many of my African brothers and sisters. With this short introduction, I say the following, and in this case I am speaking on my behalf and for my African-Australian and any other person from Africa:

1. We strongly need laws that will protect people against racial vilification in Australia and make Australia a safe place.
2. We feel that current laws are working well.
3. Personally, I totally disagree with the Government's proposed changes to the laws, and I am sure most of my community, if not all, would support my stand.
4. I believe the government can do justice to the existing racial vilification laws by even increasing the penalty.

There is no day that passes that I don't hear of racial vilification in the community, either by emails, telephone, and radio or even in person. Most Africans experience racial and discriminatory behaviours in the workplace, schools, community access/funding, sports, local governance, business and at universities because there is a culture of vilification that has never had a strong government that puts laws that makes it a criminal case to racially abuse people of difference races.

By consistent, after finishing the first draft of this letter, one of my executive member and I were driving on Prospect road, when we were confronted by this person hulling abuse at Afghani shop keepers and telling them to close and go. He was lucky he was not knocked down by two cars.

I am going to give my own example of racial extreme dislike. These are just a few of many of my own encounters:

1. I worked as a scientist for many years for SA government. One particular day, I arrived in Adelaide by car from Melbourne obviously very tired. I stopped at North Adelaide to buy something to eat. Coming out of the car, two males standing a few metres from me approached me and asked this question "Do you work for the government?" I replied, "Yes". Next question was "couldn't the government find somebody else to employ?" That went like a sword in my spine. I asked this person, "What is the wrong with me?" do I have two noses, one eye and one ear?. Don't I look like everyone else?. They laughed cynically. I in fact went back to the car and drop home and ate nothing that night as I was very angry.
2. There is this person about 60 years of age, who whenever he saw Africans whether children, women or men he uses abusive language, such as you are too black and you don't fit in this society. Most of this was reported to me regularly. Then it was my turn driving past his house. He was watering grass in 35 degrees heat. He saw me and sprayed my car with water. I came out of the car and he went and shut his gate. A week later, I was driving along the third street from his street and he was walking. When he saw me, he put his rude finger at me. I stopped a few metres and when he came closer, I asked him, what did I do for you to put rude fingers at me? His reply was "*Go back to the forest you don't belong here*". My not violent reaction was an assurance in me that I can control myself. I reported this person to the police. In actual fact I understand the police visited him at home and since then, when he sees me he only laughs cynically.

Following many racial attacks within the community, we contacted the police and the Holden Hill Police Chief worked with us for quite some time. We had several community consultation meetings chaired by the police Chief, which resulted in a 50% reduction of the racial attacks.

With this short note, On behalf of the African Community of South Australia, we urge you not to go ahead in making easier for people to vilify others for whatever reason. We want a peaceful country.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

David Malinda

President, African Community Organisation of SA, (ACOSA)

Cc:

David Shepherd M

Secretary General, African Community Organisation of SA, (ACOSA)