

Letters to The Australian – 23 July 2022

For more than 30 years I have lived and worked as a public servant in some of the most remote parts of Queensland, including Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Australians aren't homogenous. To think otherwise is soft racism at its most pernicious. It's the kind of racism that can't even conceive of the possibility that a righteous life can be led without adhering to middleclass Anglo-Celtic norms. A Murri has less in common with a Noongar, linguistically and culturally, than your average white Australian has with a Slovak. Some tribes with common boundaries have been in conflict since Jesus was playing scrumhalf.

If you want to get a rise out of a black man, treat him like your "project". Reading some of the material The Australian publishes, it is easy to see that pontification is what determines Indigenous policy, rather than reallife experience.

If you want to know what is best for Indigenous people, leave the green leafies and go and live with them for a year. Regardless of whether you are black, white or brindle, your opinion is of little consequence to an Aboriginal man or woman unless they have connected with you as an individual – and this won't happen if you only fly in with a flashy entourage every six months. This is about the only recurring theme you will see in communities.

The voice runs the risk of just being more gammin that makes white people feel good while giving proto-bureaucrats the opportunity to future-proof six-figure salaries in unassailable white elephants.

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