

FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA

Mr Josh Machin
Head of Public Policy
Meta Australia

Thursday, 25th March 2023

An open letter to Facebook on racism

Dear Mr Machin,

We always knew that as momentum grew for things like Treaty, Truth-telling, and the Voice to Parliament, the darkness that lurks in our society could be drawn out into the light.

And we always expected to cop more abuse online as a result. Sadly, we're used to it.

In the last week, we've blocked about 300 people who have gone out of their way to leave racist attacks and slurs on our posts.

In the wake of the torrent of racism directed at Stan Grant, NITV, and many other Aboriginal organisations, we're calling on the social media platforms to do more – and do better.

In Australia racial vilification is deemed hate speech. It is unlawful in public places. Yet online, reporting comments calling us 'feral Abos' and 'black k@*ts' results in no action.

When we've reported these posts to Facebook, we're told this behaviour doesn't go against Facebook's community standards.

If that's the case, Facebook's community standards just aren't good enough and they are part of the problem.

We call on Facebook to stop putting the onus on us to defend ourselves against a tidal wave of racism and start taking responsibility for what happens on their platforms.

We call on them to work with us to provide a safe environment for everyone – because our community shouldn't be subjected to hatred just for existing and our staff shouldn't have to sift through such hate when doing their job.

We know the majority of Australians believe in fairness and are committed to walking together on this journey towards a better, reconciled, future.

To those who feel so threatened by Aboriginal people fighting for justice and equality, we're willing to have the conversations.

Not all of them are going to be comfortable. But we won't tolerate racist bullshit.



Amy Rust

Head of Engagement and Communications, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria