

Shame on Racist Australia - Indigenous Journalist's Speech Goes Viral

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A powerful speech by Indigenous journalist Stan Grant in which he says the "Australian dream is rooted in racism" has gone viral.



Stan Grant

Grant addressed an audience in Sydney on the impact of colonisation and discrimination as part of the IQ2 debate series held by The Ethics Centre.

The speech was made last year but was published online just a week before Australia Day. It has resonated with Australians, having been viewed more than 736,000 times on Facebook and 15,000 times on YouTube.

In his address Grant was asked to argue for or against the topic "Racism is destroying the Australian Dream", and said racism was at its heart.

Grant opened his speech acknowledging when AFL player Adam Goodes was "hounded" and booed, and told "he was not Australian".

"When we heard those boos, we heard a sound that was very familiar to us ... we heard a howl of humiliation that echoes across two centuries of disposition, injustice, suffering and survival," Grant said.

"We heard the howl of the Australian dream, and it said to us again, you're not welcome."

He said we sung of the Australian dream, "Australians all let us rejoice for we are young and free".

"My people die young in this country," Grant said.

"We die 10 years younger than the average Australian, and we are far from free. We are fewer than 3 per cent of the Australian population and yet we are 25 per cent — a quarter of those Australians locked up in our prisons.

"And if you're a juvenile it is worse, it is 50 per cent. An Indigenous child is more likely to be locked up in prison than they are to finish high school."

He referenced a famous poem from Dorothea Mackellar, saying his people's rights "were extinguished because we were not here according to British law".

"I love a sunburned country, a land of sweeping plains, of rugged mountain ranges," Grant quoted from the poem My Country.

"It reminds me that my people were killed on those plains. We were shot on those plains, diseases ravaged us on those plains."

Grant has received praise online, including from journalists Hugh Riminton and Fran Kelly, as well as Mike Carlton who described it as a "Martin Luther King moment" on Twitter.

He said he had succeeded in life not because of, but in spite of, the Australian dream.

"My grandfather on my mother's side, who married a white woman, who reached out to Australia, lived on the fringes of town until the police came, put a gun to his head, bulldozed his tin humpy, and ran over the graves of the three children he buried there. That's the Australian dream," Grant said.

"And if the white blood in me was here tonight, my grandmother, she would tell you of how she was turned away from a hospital giving birth to her first child because she was giving birth to the child of a black person.

"The Australian dream. We are better than this."

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