



AFLW Disrespect A Towering Female Role Model

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The AFL decision to renege on its commitment last weekend to observe a minute's silence to honour the passing of Queen Elizabeth II before AFLW matches has greater long-term repercussions for Australia's future than we realise.

The move comes after some clubs were worried that commemorating Her Majesty could be offensive to Indigenous Australians.

Unless we dismantle the logic behind the move, similar cancellations will continue to occur in the future.

To start with, this is not an isolated occurrence. It is born out of a wider phenomenon at play across modern Australia.

Any remnants of the British Empire these days tend to end up becoming the subject of widespread criticism in the best case and outright cancellation in the worst.



The entire debate about changing the date of Australia Day from 26 January is a case in point.

Its underlying logic is the same as the refusal to observe a minute's silence to commemorate the Queen's passing.

According to that logic, the date is an offensive reminder to Indigenous Australians about the day their land was conquered by a foreign power, the British Empire.

Not a nice feeling, if you're Indigenous.

Never mind the great things that the Brits brought here, often these reactions are based on emotion.

Likewise, the Queen is perceived by critics to be representing the 'conquerors'.

Public opinions are never completely uniform in any population sample. Indigenous communities are no exception.

The stark contrast between the attitudes of the two Indigenous Senators Lidia Thorpe and Jacinta Price towards reconciliation is a perfect example.

While Senator Price is correct and many Indigenous Australians, particularly ones out in remote communities, couldn't care less about symbolic gestures and virtue signalling, the reality is, some do.

There are those whose attitudes are, in fact, closer to those of Senator Thorpe's.

In their minds, Indigenous people are effectively still under British 'occupation' because sovereignty was never ceded.

The AFL, no doubt, thinks that. From a moral standpoint, it is doing the right thing by cancelling the minute's silence.

But the precedent that sets undermines the institutional fabric of our society.

The House of Windsor, to which the late Queen Elizabeth II belonged, was among the least politically interventionist of all.

By the time of their arrival at the British throne, everyday political decision-making had already been relegated to Parliament.

What this constitutional monarchy represents is the capacity of an ancient institution to listen, to learn, to adapt, and survive.

Today's Australia isn't the Australia of 1788. At the time, the Monarch was King George III and Indigenous Australians were denied many opportunities they presently have.

This would remain the case under every subsequent monarch after him, until she took office.

If the AFL wanted to make a statement about any of these, it would've been a different story.

In our own time, the monarch was Queen Elizabeth II and the only monarch to date who oversaw Indigenous Australians being guaranteed the federal vote in 1962 and counted as part of the population census since 1967.

She doesn't deserve to be discredited.

The more we get into the habit of acknowledging that remnants of the British Empire are 'offensive', the more we essentially concede that this country shouldn't have been settled.

Nothing constructive can come out of such attitudes.

The same argument would be used to change the flag, because it carries a Union Jack and that could be deemed an 'offensive reminder' of the British Empire.

Or the fact that English is our national language, or that we have a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy, or that we practise Common Law.

This mentality leads to an endless chain of guilt, revisionism, and self-loathing, which might be profitable to media pundits and Greens senators aiming to score cheap political points, but which ultimately damages Australian society and its culture.

It erodes any civic cohesion or national pride and jettisons majoritarian politics in favour of a divisive black arm-band view of history.

If the AFL wants to exacerbate this chain of guilt and revisionism by wading into 'post-colonialist' culture wars, then they must accept the consequences.

Their virtue signalling will only further division and cultural tensions within our society.

Symbolic gestures such as the refusal to commemorate the Queen's passing may well seem trivial.

However, they are representative of a broader societal malaise that is not only typified by minority voices such as Senators Mehreen Faruqi or Linda Thorpe, but which are rapidly taking hold of the corporate and political classes across the Anglosphere.

Rather than worrying about 'causing offence' perhaps corporate Australians should move towards a majoritarian politics.

One where concrete policy action to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians is at the forefront and symbolic cancel-culture is actively avoided.

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