

# Politics, media 'run by Anglos'

## EXCLUSIVE

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There are too many Anglo-Celtic faces in the media and leading the nation, the Australian Human Rights Commission has argued, as it calls for greater ethnic and cultural diversity to "strengthen multiculturalism in Australia".

The AHRC, which regularly polarises public and political opinion, argues that while Australia's multicultural society is strong, there are several issues with the potential to undermine its foundations.

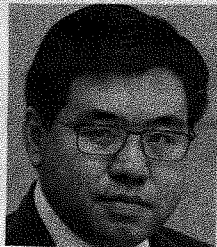
These include racial discrimination, inflammatory rhetoric in public debates, and an under-representation of diversity in the nation's institutions because the "ethnic and cultural default of leadership remains Anglo-Celtic".

"A lack of diversity in leadership and in the media could conceivably lead to a perception of what it is to be 'Australian' that does not reflect our multicultural character," the AHRC has told a Senate inquiry examining ways to strengthen multiculturalism.

Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane, who is spearheading a campaign to introduce racial and cultural diversity targets in corporate Australia, yesterday hit back at critics of his push, claiming there had been attempts to "reopen ideological culture wars".

"On matters of race, we hear constantly about so-called political correctness running riot, or of cultural Marxism taking over public institutions," Dr Soutphommasane told a Multicultural Mental Health Forum in Perth.

"Some commentators complain about society being mollycoddled or of minorities having



protections against hurt feelings. They complain about there not being enough freedom of speech to racially insult or offend others. And they complain when people are called out on racism.

"They complain about people encouraging a 'victim mentality' or for 'playing the victim'.

"Often you get the impression it is a graver offence to speak out against racism than it is to perpetrate racism."

His comments come after the Turnbull government, empowered by an angry backbench, earlier this week rejected an AHRC-led campaign for racial and cultural diversity targets to be pushed on corporate Australia.

The AHRC's July 2016 reform blueprint, called Leading for Change, recommended that organisations consider "sending signals on cultural diversity" by collecting data on the cultural backgrounds of employees in addition to the setting of aspirational targets.

Liberal MPs openly rebelled against the campaign, warning against any steps that amount to "racial profiling" of employees.

They also urged newly appointed commission president Rosalind Croucher to ensure the body does not become a "commission to implement left-wing policy".

The MPs, including senator James Paterson, senator Eric Abetz and George Christensen, labelled the plan "creepy", "social engineering", "out of control" and "overstepping the mark".

During his speech yesterday, Dr Soutphommasane also claimed "our society is becoming more sadistic", pointing to trolling of social media.

"Facebook has become a cesspool of bigotry and racism. Social media has become a breeding ground of hate," he said.

Dr Soutphommasane said that following the news last week that Yassmin Abdel-Magied was moving to London, Yahoo 7 ran an online poll about whether she should move or face her critics.

"People may have disagreed with Abdel-Magied but some of the vitriol directed at her had a clear racial tinge," he said.