

EDITORIAL

In June this year, Indigenous Rugby League player Timana Tahu walked out on his NSW Blues team just days before the second State of Origin match. Tahu's walk-out, a protest against racial slurs made by his assistant coach during a training session, demanded that we revisit the debate around racism in sport and whether laws and codes sufficiently draw the line between competitive banter about size or speed and more insidious remarks about race and colour.

In our feature article, Barry Judd questions whether the sporting arena really is an equaliser. Are individuals judged purely on their strength, agility and capacity to play with a team or are there more subliminal factors at play, like culture, ignorance or prejudice, which anti-vilification laws, codes of conduct and the promotion of diversity have failed to extinguish? Indeed, professional sports do not singularly bear the responsibility for eradicating racism in wider society. However, in an interview with Ashley Walker, Marcia Ella-Duncan reminds us that in a sports-obsessed country like Australia, there exists a 'critical mass', which can be educated and made aware that discrimination is unacceptable regardless of where or when it occurs.

This edition also explores systemic issues in other arenas. Jessica Harvie reviews Chloe Hooper's non-fiction book *The Tall Man*, about the death in custody of Mulrunji Doomadgee on Palm Island and the seemingly endless inquiries and litigation, which continue to devastate the Palm Island community. The review provides some context for Alisa Wick's analysis of the apparent injustice experienced by Lex Wotton, the Palm Island man convicted of rioting in the wake of Mulrunji's death, in the Queensland parole system. In light of a recent family law decision, Keryn Ruska and Zoe Rathus question the capacity of the current legal system to adequately recognise Indigenous familial relations. With the long-awaited introduction of the resale royalty in Australia, Lan Pham considers the impact on Indigenous artists and their access to the benefits of the scheme.

Moments like Tahu's walk-out inspire fresh debate and provide opportunities for change. The ILC Open Forum on Racism in Sport, reviewed by Laura Ferraro, heightened my understanding that where we encounter racism in sport, we are dealing with issues of rights: rights to equality, respect, health and social inclusion. We cannot reason away racist remarks made on-field or in a heated, pre-match warm-up as a context-specific event, the effects of which are limited to individuals directly involved. This downplays inadequacies in existing regulations and denies the persistence of systemic discrimination in sport, sending a message out to wider society that racism is sometimes acceptable. The individual stand taken by Tahu effectively intercepted this message; collectively, it can be changed.

Lucienne Cassidy
Editor

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SEEKING CONTRIBUTORS

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