

## **PLENARY – RACISM**

### **Speaker 1 – Justine Atkinson, University of Newcastle**

#### **Racism on University of Newcastle Campus**

- The idea of international students taking the place of domestic students is still present.
- Indigenous students experience racism from cultural assumptions to assumptions that are made on the basis of appearance.

Racism initially presented in name calling, stereotypes etc, racist propaganda and proceeded to violence. For example:

- an Asian PG student crashed a car into a group of Australian students who reacted with verbal taunts.
- In May 2004 an African student was verbally harassed and threatened.
- Asian students were trapped in their house for 2 hours.
- A student had a broken jaw as a result of racist violence.
- An interracial couple was harassed.
- A unconfirmed report about a US student being stabbed.

#### *The Patriotic Youth League*

A poster with racist propaganda about black men and AIDS coincided with the development of the Patriotic Youth League (PYL) on campus. The objectives of the PYL have been displayed: "Patriotic Youth League: Cultivation of Australia's Awakening".

- anti-immigration, multiculturalism etc.
- pro Defence
- pro the 'family' unit
- the definition of Australia excludes indigenous peoples
- support One Nation, Family First and white supremacist groups, including Volksfront Australia (a new Aryan group in Australia)

#### *The Student Patriot Movement*

First noticed during University of Newcastle O-week having a table at the clubs event. "Fight the Sum Takeover of our University"

Creation of the group coincides with the Iraq war, the Bali bombing, high profile media cases concerning plagiarism etc.

#### *'Freedom of Speech'*

The Union/University did not intervene and said that it wanted protect 'freedom of speech'.

#### *Responses*

- union students started leafleting and gatecrashing their meetings and had a 'speakout' with the University community involved
- students lobbying for cultural awareness courses
- the union disaffiliated the Student Patriotic Movement

The media coverage that was generated created a lot of hype and tended to make the PYL look like victims in some cases.

### **Questions**

*Mark (RMIT) – Has anyone else experienced this on their campuses? People have been ripping down PYL posters.*

*Sharon (NUS/NLC) – Stickers were found at Trades Hall in Melbourne with the Eureka Stockage Flag. They are definitely targeting areas of Melbourne with a high proportion of migrant populations.*

*Adele (UQ) – The AVCC put out a statement. Connection between racism, statements opposing such and the monetary value of international students.*

*Justine – Diversity nights have been held on campus. As a result, international students have drawn together a bit more.*