



Opening Statement: Public hearing of the Inquiry into Racism, Hate and Violence Directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The following is SBS's opening statement delivered by Tanya Denning-Orman, SBS Director, First Nations, for the public hearing of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Racism, Hate and Violence Directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, held in Melbourne on Thursday 6 August 2026.

Thank you Chair.

I acknowledge and pay my respects to the Traditional Custodians of this Country where we're gathering, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation I honour their connection to and care for these lands, waterways and sky Country. I recognise them as the first peoples of this place, and pay respects to Elders past and present.

I also want to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander here today, and all those who have shared their experiences with the Committee as part of this Inquiry.

My name is Tanya Denning-Orman, a proud Birri and Guugu Yimidhirr woman from Central and North Queensland and Director, First Nations, for SBS.

I've worked in media for more than 30 years, including with NITV since its inception almost 20 years ago. During that time I've seen first-hand the devastating impact of racism, the challenges facing our journalists and communities, and the difference trusted First Nations media makes.

I'm joined by my colleagues Clare O'Neil, Director of Corporate Affairs and John Paul Janke, National Indigenous Affairs Editor and host of *The Point*.

This Inquiry comes 35 years after both the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the National Inquiry into Racist Violence found that negative and inaccurate media representation of First Nations people contributes to a social climate that tolerates racism and violence.



Those same conditions have intensified, fuelled by a digital environment where misinformation, disinformation, racism and hate can spread at unprecedented speed and scale.

Trusted First Nations media is not simply important. It is an essential part of Australia's response.

This is the environment NITV was established to help change, and this purpose has never mattered more.

NITV proudly delivers content made by, for and about First Nations people, giving primacy to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, interests and perspectives in a media landscape where those voices have too often been overlooked or misrepresented.

And as part of the SBS network, we educate and inform all Australians to promoting understanding of and respect for First Nations cultures, knowledges and histories – including with multicultural communities, in more than 60 languages.

None of this happens without our people. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander journalists don't just report on racism, hate and violence. They witness and experience it, every day, simply doing their jobs.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the pioneering work of those who came before us, including the late Rhoda Roberts AO, SBS's inaugural Elder in Residence, who transformed Australia's media and arts. It is now our responsibility to ensure the fires they lit continue to burn for generations to come.

We welcome questions from the Committee.

SBS and NITV's submission to the Inquiry is available [here](#).

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