

## **Memo to the politically correct: you have failed**

By Chris Kenny, *The Australian*, 29 March 2017

In this postmodern, politically correct, post-truth, post-Trump age, we are encouraged to forget facts, ideas and arguments, and just speculate on identity and motives. So I guess I'm the token white, middle-aged, heterosexual, right-of-centre, cisgendered male in this debate.

The question tonight is not whether I am politically correct or you support political correctness, but whether political correctness has failed itself.

Jacinta Nampijinpa Price and I contend the answer is unambiguously in the affirmative. Political correctness exists to shape our thoughts; as George Orwell explained in detail, control language and you control thought. But it is failing. Dissent is rudely breaking through.

The agenda of political correctness is that of the left — the green left, the socially progressive left, the virtue-signalling left. The politically correct pretend gender away, reducing heterosexuality to just one of a suite of options; they want us all to pretend we are saving the planet; they'd like to eliminate borders and nationality; and they decry organised religion — well, organised Christian religion.

But in all these areas the more the PC mob imposes strictures through universities, bureaucracies and the media-political class, the more the mainstream resists. The primacy of sovereignty is reclaimed by the masses through Brexit, European politics and the rise of Donald Trump. Climate gestures are under attack and the Paris Agreement seems increasingly likely to be ignored. It has been Trumped.

Intolerant anti-Muslim parties are on the march in Europe and Australia, and walls and bans figured prominently in Trump's ascendancy. Not only is this happening despite a regime of political correctness in liberal democracies, it is largely a backlash against political correctness. "I think the big problem this country has is being politically correct," said candidate Trump — he was that blatant.

So, too, is resurrected renegade Australian politician Pauline Hanson, who runs anti-Muslim and anti-immigration lines. "The problem is," Hanson says, "we have not had leaders with the foresight or intestinal fortitude to cast aside political correctness."

If political correctness aided the rise of Trump and Hanson — or indeed the success of Brexit or Marine Le Pen — it has failed itself. It has provided a springboard for all that it despises.

The moral, ideological and political cowardice of centre-left and centre-right parties in the face of the politically correct thought police has created an extreme backlash. This happens because political correctness has become an absurdity; a perversity. Instead of railing against indigenous dysfunction and disadvantage, it attacks a cartoonist; instead of saving rivers, it attacks coal companies; it boycotts a beer to shut down debate on gay marriage. Political correctness has divorced the media-political class from the mainstream, creating a chasm between political posturing and common sense.

It is worse than you think. When a radicalised Muslim cleric pulled a gun, said he had a bomb and took 17 people hostage in a cafe near here — claiming allegiance to Islamic State — the

politically correct started a social media campaign trumpeting care and solidarity, not for the hostages but for Muslims on public transport. The “I’ll ride with you” hashtag started when a former Greens candidate in Brisbane tweeted about a fabricated incident on a train — this was virtue-signalling to combat an anti-Muslim backlash that never happened. The media loved it; one ABC presenter said it was the only “bright spot” of the siege. Imagine that: a “bright spot” in a terror attack.

Real people held at gunpoint — two innocents were later killed — while the Twitter PC brigade pretended mainstream Australians and Islamophobia were the real threat. And it was all fake.

At the inquest we learned that while police waited, preferring not to launch an operation against the terrorist, they did launch Operation Hammerhead, which put police on the streets to protect Muslims from this imaginary backlash. This is political correctness gone mad.

Politicians often talk in riddles to avoid mention of Islamism; in response to jihadist terrorism Barack Obama held a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism. People see this weakness and vote for the hardliners who at least recognise a serious threat. Political correctness fails itself.

Let’s look at feminism. Confronted by the subjugation of some Muslim women — sequestered under the burka or subjected to female genital mutilation and forced child marriages — the politically correct don’t protest but don scarfs to show solidarity. Again, that’s a fail.

On border protection the politically correct campaigned against tough laws and got their wish in Australia in 2008. This restarted the evil people-smuggling trade, saw at least 1200 drown, tens of thousands go into detention and left those who couldn’t afford a people-smuggler stranded in camps, sliding further back in the queue. Fail.

The politically correct want gay marriage but didn’t like Australian voters having a say, so they campaigned against a plebiscite; if not for the PC brigade gay marriage would be legal. Fail.

The politically correct believe it is more important to display moral superiority than confront reality and get things done. The evidence is all around us: political correctness has failed itself. But of course practitioners, such as our opponents, can’t admit that — because that would be politically incorrect.

*This is an edited transcript of Chris Kenny’s address to the Ethics Centre’s debate on political correctness that took place at Sydney Town Hall last night.*