

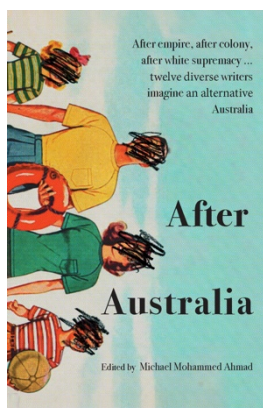
Attachment 2- Background and Details of this Complaint, Made under the Racial Discrimination Act

[1] I, Roger Karge, resident of Melbourne Australia, make the following complaint, under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*,

that the respondents,

1. Affirm Press ACN 35 606 237 576, 28 Thistlethwaite Street, South Melbourne VIC 3205, Email: info@affirmpress.com.au, Ph: (03) 8695 9623, Fax: (03) 8256 0114, [website](https://affirmpress.com.au) : <https://affirmpress.com.au>;
2. Diversity Arts Australia, 8 Victoria Rd, Parramatta NSW 2150 Tel: +612 8821 9169, info@diversityarts.org.au, [website](http://diversityarts.org.au) : <http://diversityarts.org.au>, and
3. Sweatshop Literacy Movement., I.C.E. (Information & Cultural Exchange), 8 Victoria Rd, Parramatta NSW 2150, Australia.

published, or caused to be published, **a book cover** for the book, ***After Australia***, edited by Michael Mohammed Ahmad, published by Affirm Press, on 9 June 2020, with ISBN: 9781925972818, in paperback form of 288 pages, being an anthology of fiction, and that said book cover constitutes '**racial hatred and vilification**' as defined under the *Act*, and is therefore against the law.



Offending book-cover image [downloaded from](https://affirmpress.com.au/publishing/after-australia/) : <https://affirmpress.com.au/publishing/after-australia/>

[2] Reasons for the Complaint

I make this complaint of '**racial hatred and vilification**' against the respondents because they have done an act (published a book cover and associated marketing material – *Note 1*) that,

- a) appears freely in public (displayed in bookshops and on-line – *Note 2*);
- b) is reasonably likely in all the circumstances **to offend, insult, and intimidate** a group of people, specifically Australian 'white' men, women and children, and families of the European race or descent (*Note 3*);
- c) was done specifically because of the **race and colour** of these Australian 'white' men, women and children and families of European race or descent, and

d) was **not done in good faith**, as I claim there was an **improper motive**, which involved at best, **a callous indifference** to the offense or denigration caused by the publishing of the book cover, or at worst, involved **a deliberate intention** to offend, denigrate and threaten 'white' men, women and children, and families of European race or descent (*Note 3*).

[3] Note 1 - Book cover and associated marketing material



[4] Note 2 – This racially offensive material is displayed in public or on-line with easy access by Australian 'white' men, women and children of European race or descent including, but not limited to the following sites:

- [Diversity Arts Australia](http://diversityarts.org.au/after-australia/). (<http://diversityarts.org.au/after-australia/>)

- [The ABC](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-16/after-australia-anthology-australian-speculative-fiction/12350228) (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-16/after-australia-anthology-australian-speculative-fiction/12350228>)

- [Sweatshop Publishing](https://www.facebook.com/Sweatshopws/) (<https://www.facebook.com/Sweatshopws/>)

- [Readings Bookstore](https://www.readings.com.au/products/32648517/after-australia) (Melbourne) (<https://www.readings.com.au/products/32648517/after-australia>)

[5] Note 3 – I understand and agree that the *Racial Discrimination Act* (RTA) aims to strike a balance between the right to communicate freely ('freedom of speech') and the right to live free from racial hatred. To uphold this balance, I make no complaint to prevent the publication of the contents of the book and do not wish to restrict the freedom of speech of the writers.

[6] However, I claim that publishing the images on the front cover of the book, and within the associated marketing material, was **not "done reasonably and in good faith"**, but rather was done deliberately:

- a) to provoke the ire of adult 'white' Australians;
- b) to threaten 'white' Australians in general, and 'white' Australian children in particular, so as to make them feel 'unsafe' and insecure regarding their future in Australia;
- c) to provoke some readers to be aggressive, vocal, hateful and violent in their attitude and dealings with 'white' Australian families, especially 'white' children, and
- d) to incite some readers to believe that it is legitimate to believe that the current Australian society, consisting predominately of 'white' men, women and children can be 'defaced' and therefore 'erased', 'eliminated' or greatly curtailed, for the future benefit of 'non-white' men, women and children in Australia.

[7] I claim that the publication of the offending front book cover for *After Australia*, and its associated marketing material, does **not** meet the RTA classification as being “**done reasonably and in good faith**”:

- as an **artistic work or performance** – for example, a play in which racially offensive attitudes are expressed by a character;

The offending ‘defacement’ of ‘white’ men women and children has not been done by a ‘character’ in a work of fiction, but rather has been approved by the real-life Respondents – the publishers Affirm Press in partnership with Diversity Arts Australia and Sweatshop Literacy Movement and presumably with the approval of the real-life editor, Michael Mohammed Ahmad;

The book cover and offending marketing material are meant to be taken seriously;

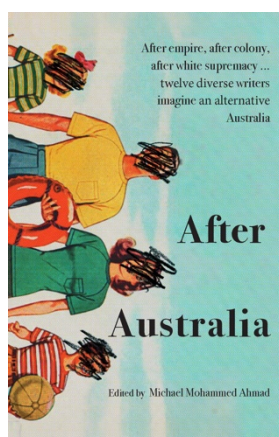
- nor as a **publication, that is made for genuine academic or scientific purposes**;

The book cover and its associated marketing materials are for an, “anthology of speculative fiction”, as described by the publisher and not for **genuine academic or scientific purposes**, and

- nor is it **making a fair comment**, given that a racial hatred of ‘white’ men, women and children, and advocating their ‘defacement’ or elimination, is patently unfair and discriminatory and would not be tolerated by any other racial group.

[8] Background and Details of the Complaint

On, or about, June 17th 2020, while searching for articles related to the Indigenous Recognition process, as well as the current Black Live Matter protests, I came across on-line advertisements for the book, *After Australia*, and was immediately struck by the book cover image below, which I, as a ‘white’ Australian family man with two daughters, found highly **offensive, insulting, and intimidating**.



[9] Further on-line searching found marketing images that clearly indicated to me, that some of the contributing authors to this book were **inciting racial hatred** by happily promoting the cover of the book with its ‘defaced’ ‘white’ people.

[10] The title of the book, I claim, is highly provocative and racially threatening :

'After Australia', with the subtitle, 'After empire, after colony, after white supremacy...twelve diverse writers imagine an alternative Australia'.

On viewing this book cover, I immediately had a feeling of dread - here was a book cover that sought to purposely intimidate me and my family with a racial hatred based solely on the colour of our skin – that is, 'white'.

The book cover led one to believe that the time was coming when people, who looked like me and my family, were to be 'defaced' in a Soviet-style toppling of our 'white' society. We were to be 'eliminated' and a new society, *'After my Australia'*, was to be imagined.

This 'defacement' was promoted by a group of Indigenous people and people of colour, some of whom openly expressed their hatred of me and my family in the associated marketing material by happily displaying a copy of the book showing the defacement on my race and group.

[11] What is 'Defacement'?

Historically '**defacement**' is well known as a powerful, discriminatory, violent and hateful act.

The following examples illustrate the 'racial' and 'group' hatred that is behind the crime of 'defacement.'

[12] The USA

In the US, '**defacement**' is seen as a '**hate crime**', as reported in the *Washington Post* of November 20, 2015 in the article, "*Harvard Law has 'serious' racism problem", dean says after black professors' portraits defaced*". (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/11/19/defacing-of-black-harvard-professor-portraits-investigated-as-hate-crime/>)



A Harvard Law School professor's portrait was defaced on Nov. 19, 2015. (Elizabeth Tuttle)



This photo, courtesy of Harvard Law student Elizabeth Tuttle, shows portraits of Harvard Law School professors, with a black piece of tape covering the face of a black professor. (Elizabeth Tuttle)

"Portraits of Harvard Law School professors line the walls of Wasserstein Hall. But on Thursday morning, black tape covered the faces of African American professors' images, prompting campus police to investigate the act as a hate crime", Harvard Law dean Martha Minow said in a statement'.

And

"The defacement of an image is always violent, a stand-in for the harming of flesh or obliteration of ideas" – [the Village voice](https://www.villagevoice.com/2016/08/24/disfigure-and-ground-how-defacement-became-art-in-the-twentieth-century/).

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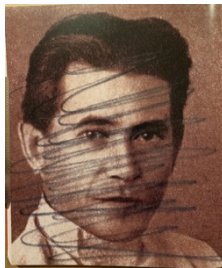
[13] The Soviet Union

During the horrors of the group purges and genocide that occurred in Stalin’s Soviet Union, ‘defacement’ meant that one was purged from political office and executed, often along with one’s family. Similarly, various ethnic and racial groups were ‘defaced’ by Stalin and obliterated.

[14] My own father and his family only narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Soviets during the horrors of the Second World War. My father had been arrested and imprisoned in a Soviet cell in East Berlin and, but for the fact that he managed to escape through the bomb-damaged window of his cell, he would not have migrated to Australia and I and my family would not be here now. Instead, the only record of my father’s fate might have been a scribbled-out photo of him in some Soviet archive.

It is because of this family back-ground, that I find the act of ‘defacement’ highly **offensive, insulting and intimidating** and a form of **racial vilification** and a **hate crime**, when it is done on the basis of the skin-colour of the victim.

[15] Examples of Soviet ‘Defacement’



The ‘defacement’ of Nikolai Yezhov, a portrait of whom was found in an album on Kazakhstan, published in the late 1930’s that had been scribbled out by the owner following news of his execution. – Photo and Caption from : *The Commissar Vanishes*, David King, Henry Holt & Co. 1997, p162-163.



*‘In 1934 the Soviet artist Alexander Rodchenko was commissioned by the state publishing house to design the album ‘Ten Years in Uzbekistan’, which included many portraits of Party bosses. But in 1937, at the height of the Great Purges, Stalin ordered a major overhaul of the Uzbek leadership and heads began to roll. Many Party bosses photographed for the album were liquidated. The album suddenly became illegal literature. Using thick black India ink, Rodchenko was compelled to deface his own book. The macabre results are both brutal and terrifying’ - Photographs and text – *ibid.* p126-133.*

[16] In SE ASIA

This English traveller speaks for all non-racists when confronted by real-life examples of ‘defacement’.

He notes on his [visit](https://www.nothere.co.uk/cambodia-beaches-barbed-wire/) (<https://www.nothere.co.uk/cambodia-beaches-barbed-wire/>) to the museum devoted to the memory of Pol Pot’s Cambodian genocidal regime, that to ‘deface’ an image of a person is an attempt to:

“obliterate them from history, to erase them from the collective memory of [a]...nation”.

fashion, before being marched to the ‘killing fields’ of Choeung Ek and executed. The prison is now a museum devoted to Pol Pot’s genocidal regime, with most of the cells left largely untouched, the torture devices still in place and blood stains visible on the walls. I generally think of myself as a fairly stoical, unemotional person, but I found Tuol Sleng to be a genuinely harrowing experience. We walked past row after row of photographs documenting the victims, males and female, young and old, and the fact that it all happened so recently just seemed to amplify the horror of the place. In one room there were photos of Pol Pot and his fellow Khmer Rouge leaders, Ieng Sary and Khiev Samphan, and the face of each one had been scratched away, as if to obliterate them from history, to erase them from the collective memory of this scarred nation.



Photograph and Text from [‘Not Here’ website](https://www.nothere.co.uk/cambodia-beaches-barbed-wire/) - Tom 15/6/2015

[17] An Academic Analysis of Defacement

Academic, Valentin Groebner, who teaches medieval and Renaissance history at the University of Basel in Switzerland has published a book, *Defaced*, (Zone Books, 2004) in which he explores,

‘why are violence and anonymity so closely associated?’, and how,

‘...the visual representation of extreme physical violence renders its victims anonymous. It makes of real people, nameless exemplars of horror. It renders them, to use the German word, ‘ungestalt’, formless, defaced’ (ibid. p11 -12).

I claim that this is a real danger to our society, as depicted in the racist and gratuitous image on the book-cover of *After Australia*, where the Respondents have been able to convey great violence and racial hatred and vilification against ‘white’ people, by depicting the victims as being faceless and anonymous. In this way, the Respondents have avoided having to take responsibility for their racial hatred – it is as if they are saying, *‘look, dear readers, we have defaced and made anonymous these ‘white’ people so we can all hate and vilify them and their society without feeling guilty’.*

[18] The Basis of the Complaint

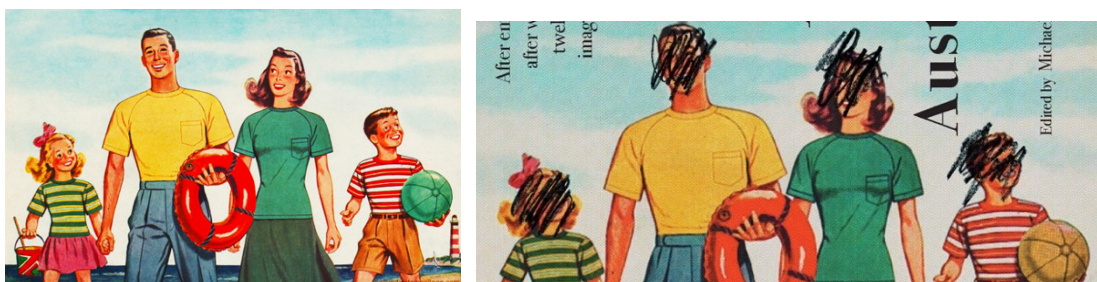
I claim that this book cover image is a gratuitous (that is, done without good reason and uncalled for) act of **racial vilification** to myself as a 'white' family man and to other 'white' families as well.

The sixteen pieces of writing in the book, *After Australia*, appear to be in no way directly reliant on the use of this particular book-cover image of a defaced 'white' family. Therefore, the Respondents could have selected another book cover image that was not **offensive, insulting, and intimidating**, and did not promote **racial vilification**, without detracting from the main body of work.

Indeed, it is worth noting that they did **not** choose an optimistic, or positive looking, book-cover image, celebrating the success of Indigenous and people of colour in their 'imagined alternative Australia'. To my mind this is evidence that the Respondents are not acting in good faith.

[19] The image they have chosen is believed not be of an Australian family, but appears to be of the 'Vintage Vacation Illustration' genre, from the US in the 1950's.

<https://www.weneedavacation.com/Cape-Cod/Articles/The-Family-Vacation/#.WUuMt71RGFE.pinterest>



Actual image as it originally appeared. The 'defaced' image on the book cover of *After Australia* on various US websites.

[20] I claim therefore that this image was chosen not for any specific relevance to Australia, but was only selected on the basis that it depicts a 'white' family and it was chosen therefore for a purely racist (skin colour) reason.

[21] I claim that this suggests that the Respondents have a desire to **incite racial hatred** against 'white' men, women and children in general, as a group. The Respondents seem to be saying, 'It does not matter what country or society we get our image from - as long as they are 'white', so we can depict their 'defacement' and convey an understanding that they are be obliterated'.

[22] I claim therefore, that displaying this book cover, depicting a 'defaced white' family, in public is unlawful under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, as it is

- based on the race and colour, of 'white' people, and is

- likely to offend, insult, humiliate and intimidate 'white' people in general and 'white' children in particular.

[23] I also claim that the Respondents were **not acting in good faith** and indeed, deliberately decided to inflame racial tensions by including a front-piece quote in the book, *After Australia*, by the US black activist, Malcolm X, namely:

'The future belongs to those who prepare for it today. – Malcom X.'

[24] According to Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm_X)

'Malcolm X taught that black people were the original people of the world, and that whites were a race of devils who were created by an evil scientist named [Yakub](#). The Nation of Islam believed that black people were superior to white people and that the demise of the white race was imminent. When questioned concerning his statements that white people were devils, Malcolm X said: "history proves the white man is a devil. Anybody who rapes, and plunders, and enslaves, and steals, and drops hell bombs on people ... anybody who does these things is nothing but a devil."

[25] According to one of the publisher's [websites](https://affirmpress.com.au/unique-partnership-with-sweatshop-and-diversity-arts-creates-bold-anthology-after-australia/) (<https://affirmpress.com.au/unique-partnership-with-sweatshop-and-diversity-arts-creates-bold-anthology-after-australia/>) [with my emphasis in bold and parenthesis]

*'Affirm Press is proud to partner with [Diversity Arts Australia](#) and the Western Sydney literacy movement [Sweatshop](#) to publish *After Australia*, an anthology of speculative fiction created by writers from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds imagining an Australia after colonisation, **after white supremacy [racially intimidating to 'white' people – implies elimination of 'white' Australians]** after climate change.*

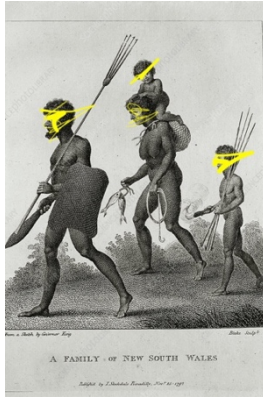
*Edited by Sweatshop founder and author of *The Lebs*, Dr Michael Mohammed Ahmad, *After Australia* will be published on 9 June 2020...The project is supported by a major partnership between Diversity Arts Australia and Sweatshop and by funding from an Australia Council for the Arts grant awarded to Diversity Arts in 2018.*

*This unflinching collection provides a glimpse of an alternative Australia from the perspectives of twelve of the country's most daring writers. Climate catastrophe, police brutality, **white genocide [highly offensive, insulting and intimidating to 'white' Australians]**, totalitarian rule and the erasure of black history provide a backdrop for stories of love, courage and hope...*

*Martin Hughes said, 'This bold and provocative [**confirmation that the book including it's cover of a defaced 'white' family is designed to "cause anger or inciting a strong reaction, especially deliberately"**]' collection should be required reading for anyone who is interested in the direction Australia is heading, and in seeing our past, present and future from perspectives outside the mainstream. *After Australia* is another great project edited by Michael Mohammed Ahmad, who continues to impress with a singular, uncompromising vision and focus, and Affirm Press is proud and privileged to be involved in this important book.'*..."

[26] To emphasize the racial hatred and vilification power of a 'defacement' image, one needs to only imagine an anthology of conservative writers discussing Aboriginal Australia, or Islam in Australia, with the following, respective 'defacement' images on the book-cover.

Indigenous people and Muslims would be right to feel racially offended and vilified.



[27] Remedies

In rectification of this act of racial hatred and vilification, and the offense and intimidation it has caused to me, I would expect that :

- a) the Respondents agree to remove and replace this image from the book-cover prior to any new print runs or editions of the book, *After Australia*, being undertaken, and
- b) the Respondents provide a written apology to the Complainant for the offense and hurt caused by this book-cover image, and display the same on their websites for 30 days.