

Andrew Bolt: How 'fake' Aborigines are hurting their cause | Herald Sun

Here we go yet again. Labor's Gordon Reid is one of the record 11 federal politicians who say they're Aboriginal, including the equally pale Senator Jacqui Lambie.

Reid, from the NSW seat of Robertson, has often declared this Aboriginality that no stranger would guess from just looking at him.

For instance, in his maiden speech to parliament he introduced himself as "a proud Wiradjuri man", by way of his father's mother, "Aunty Robyn Reid, an incredible Aboriginal elder".

He's made the same claim on the ABC and Sky News, and was angry when Opposition Leader Peter Dutton asked whether the Voice – Labor's planned Aboriginal-only advisory parliament – would have rules about who actually qualified as Aboriginal.

"That's insulting," protested Reid. "This is an issue that is extremely close to home."

I'll say.

The problem is that Reid, like an astonishing number of prominent Australians making a public fuss about their Aboriginality, turns out to have not one Aboriginal ancestor in his family tree.

No, "Aunty" Robyn Reid is not Aboriginal, and so Reid isn't, either.

That's the finding of an exhaustive search by genealogists from the dark-emu-exposed.org website, which has exposed several fake Aborigines already, mostly academics such as Prof Bruce Pascoe and Prof "Aunty" Kerrie Doyle, winner of a scholarship to Oxford meant for Aboriginal students.



Bruce Pascoe is one of several academics who have been exposed as fake Aborigines.

Of course, these experts could have made mistakes as they pieced together Reid's ancestry from records of births, deaths and marriages, and consulted newspaper clippings and family photographs.

So dark-emu-exposed.org wrote to Reid, asking him to point out the Aborigine they may have overlooked among his ancestors, who all seemed of Irish or English ancestry. Or was he the one mistaken?

No answer.

So on Saturday I wrote to Reid as well, asking him to name his Aboriginal "apical ancestor" – the first Aborigine to enter his family tree. And could the Robertson MP point to the evidence?

I didn't get an answer to those questions, but his staff have now told me to look at what he did on Monday.

Good heavens. Reid had his grandmother come to Parliament to watch him give a speech protesting he really was Aboriginal, and wondering how mean I was.

"My grandmother Aunty Robyn, of whom my community hears me speak

so fondly and frequently, is a proud Aboriginal Mingaletta elder and a woman of Wiradjuri descent," he insisted, again without naming which of her parents, grandparents or great-grandparents was the family's apical Aboriginal ancestor.

On he ploughed with emotion, but no proof: "I am proud of my Aboriginal heritage, and the desire to strip someone of this pride is something that I will never understand.

"I am of Wiradjuri heritage. I am of the Mingaletta community. I am Aboriginal. My family is Aboriginal, and we are proud."



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Fine, he's proud. I'm happy for him, and had he not turned his Aboriginality into a political calling card and qualification I'd have said nothing.

But let me explain to Reid why truth about Aboriginal ancestry – truth and proof – matters, despite his hurt pride.

Aboriginal groups are increasingly agitated that fake Aborigines are taking jobs, prizes, grants, medical access, handouts and power from real Aborigines, and are now calling it out.

For instance, Suzanne Ingram, of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, told SBS she thought 300,000 of our 800,000 Aborigines actually weren't, and if this wasn't sorted out "it is going to erase Aboriginal persons".

Activist Stephen Hagan accused fakes of "profiting from our misery", and Yvonne Weldon of NSW's Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council said fakes were holding jobs meant for Aborigines. Others resent fakes claiming to represent real Aborigines, distorting debate and public policies.

I'd thought 300,000 fakes was an exaggeration, and the real number closer to 130,000. That's the number of Australians claiming to be Aboriginal in the past two censuses who hadn't in the census before.

But now I wonder if I've been naive, after seeing how many prominent people have been exposed as fakes by dark-emu-exposed.org, despite the legal danger in getting it wrong.

They include a Victorian Labor candidate, and even South Australia's "Aboriginal" Attorney-General, Kyam Maher, who refuses point blank to explain why his family tree shows not one of the Aboriginal ancestors he's claimed to have. If there's a mistake, he won't say where.

Now there's Gordon Reid, who last weekend was at the Garma Festival in Arnhem Land, doing an Aboriginal dance and helping the Albanese government push the Voice he says is good for Aborigines.

Aborigines like, er, him?



With a proven track record of driving the news cycle, Andrew Bolt steers discussion, encourages debate and offers his perspective on national affairs. A leading journalist and commentator, Andrew's columns are published in the Herald Sun, Daily Telegraph and Advertiser. He writes Australia's most-read political blog and hosts The Bolt Report on Sky News at 7pm Monday to Thursday.

