

# Pearson blasts Left for 'soft bigotry'

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## ***BIAS 'taking massive toll'***

Noel Pearson has widened his -attack on "soft bigotry" and the ABC, warning that it has overtaken overt racism as a scourge for black Australians.

The indigenous leader from Queensland's Cape York said soft bigotry was a "prison of low expectations" that blocked progress for Aboriginal and islander people.

The "false progressiveness" of journalists at the ABC also biased its reporting of the asylum-seeker debate, immigration, coal mining, climate change and same-sex marriage.

"We will die in the arms of the false progressives whom we mistakenly think are on our side, but they harbour a basic bigotry -towards our humanity and oppose our dignity at too many turns," he said in a speech in Brisbane.

"The soft bigotry exists because its purveyors on the Left fail to get over their relativism when it comes to indigenous people and â€ the poor generally.

"This is a class aspersion ultimately, but which is particularly easy to associate with race.

"The relativism appears to -reflect an -acceptance or sensitivity to -ethnicity and culture, but in fact it cloaks double standards where the progressive purveyors fail to ask themselves: what would I want for myself and my children if I was in the same circumstance?

"The answer that you would like to participate in economic -development, have jobs, not be on welfare and so on is not a question the purveyors of this culture ask themselves." The ABC said it would not -respond publicly to Mr Pearson's salvo, the latest in a feud that erupted when the public broadcaster ran an investigation into his Good to Great Schools Australia initiative.

Mr Pearson has rejected claims made or reported by the ABC concerning the organisation's business practices and the treatment of staff.

Good to Great Schools is driving a program to lift school performance in indigenous communities on the peninsula using the rote teaching method of direct instruction.

As Mr Pearson unloaded on the ABC yesterday, tweets from ABC reporter James Thomas were projected on a screen behind him.

Mr Pearson said his critique of soft bigotry had been wrongly -interpreted as an attack on the ABC or other media organisations for showing the "misery and horrors" of Aboriginal disadvantage.

He credited the ABC with a proud record of spotlighting -neglect, abuse and suffering.

"My problem is not with the journalism exposing the problems," he said. "My problem lies with the journalism that deals with attempts to tackle the very problems about (which) this journalism constantly reports.

"Because it is in relation to the policy response that the culture of soft bigotry at the ABC and other progressive media comes to the fore. This is where the ideological and cultural bias of the institution colours everything. This is where the false progressiveness of the journalists as individuals and as a culture comes in." Mr Pearson said soft bigotry was a form of prejudice that took a massive toll on marginalised -people and the country needed to wake up to it. If the "hard bigotry" of racial prejudice and discrimination had been a wall for indigenous Australians, the "soft bigotry of low -expectations is â€ the compassionista's prison, having nothing to do with true social progress".