



MEDIA RELEASE

From:

African Think Tank Inc.

WORKING WITH
VICTORIA'S AFRICAN COMMUNITY

www.att.org.au
m) 0405 479 275

ATT Media Release 3 December 2009

AFRICAN THINK TANK WELCOMES ACMA FINDINGS ON INACCURATE REPORTAGE, CALLS ON ALL MEDIA TO TAKE NOTE.

African Think Tank today welcomed the ACMA's findings that reports by Channels 7, 9 and 10 presented inaccurate and misleading stories regarding Sudanese refugees in south-east Melbourne.

"It's a very good sign that the commercial television stations have recognised the need to improve their standards in this area and have instituted training and processes to improve this in future," said ATT Chairperson Dr. Berhan Ahmed today. "Previous media releases and advisories from the ATT have drawn attention to this problem and to the risk that racial tensions can be created and made worse by inaccurate reportage. Yesterday's decision completely vindicates ATT's position that reportage has been inaccurate. I am very happy to see the commitment to improve by commercial television stations. But there is still a need for further improvement, and I hope that radio and print media will also take note. African Think Tank submitted compliant on media misrepresentation of Australian Africans to ACMA.

"It is very clear from police reports that new Australians of African background has a lower incidence of violent crime than mainstream society. The media have played a significant part in creating the wrong impression in the community. Such stories have also been seized upon by some to try to build racial tensions and create divisions within Australian society.

"The only way for us to create a harmonious and fair Australia is for us all to work together and to make sure that media works to solve, not to worsen, any racial tensions within our beautiful land."

Background

Yesterday's decision by ACMAⁱ is only one example where reviews have found that media stories misreport and give an overly negative impression of Africans and/or Muslims.

- Media Watch has reported on such misleading and wildly inaccurate stories.ⁱⁱ
- Stories about the brutal murder of young Sudanese Liep Gony at first said that the murder was by African Gangs, whereas in fact it was a random, racially motivated murder, a hate crime against Australians of African descent. .
- A study by Prof. Peter Manning of UTS Sydney found in 2006 that the headlines of media stories involving Muslims were very much more negative than the accompanying stories justified.ⁱⁱⁱ
- A 2008 report, Rights of Passage,^{iv} by the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission found that young Sudanese faced significant discrimination in Melbourne's South-East.

ⁱ http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_311966

ⁱⁱ <http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/s2054150.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Manning, P.C. 2006, Us and Them: A Journalist's Investigation of Media, Muslims and the Middle East, 1, Random House, Sydney, Australia.

^{iv} <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/Rights%20of%20Passage%20project%20update%20EMAIL%20ersion%202009.pdf>

Mr Geoff Byng ATT web manager and media organiser (felisgris@yahoo.com)
Dr. Berhan Ahmed –Chairperson, African Think Tank Inc
e) berhanahmed@iprimus.com.au