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Anthony Mundine fires back over National Anthem boycott

Opinion

Sorry to tell you, but not everything is racist

Anthony Dillon, The Daily Telegraph

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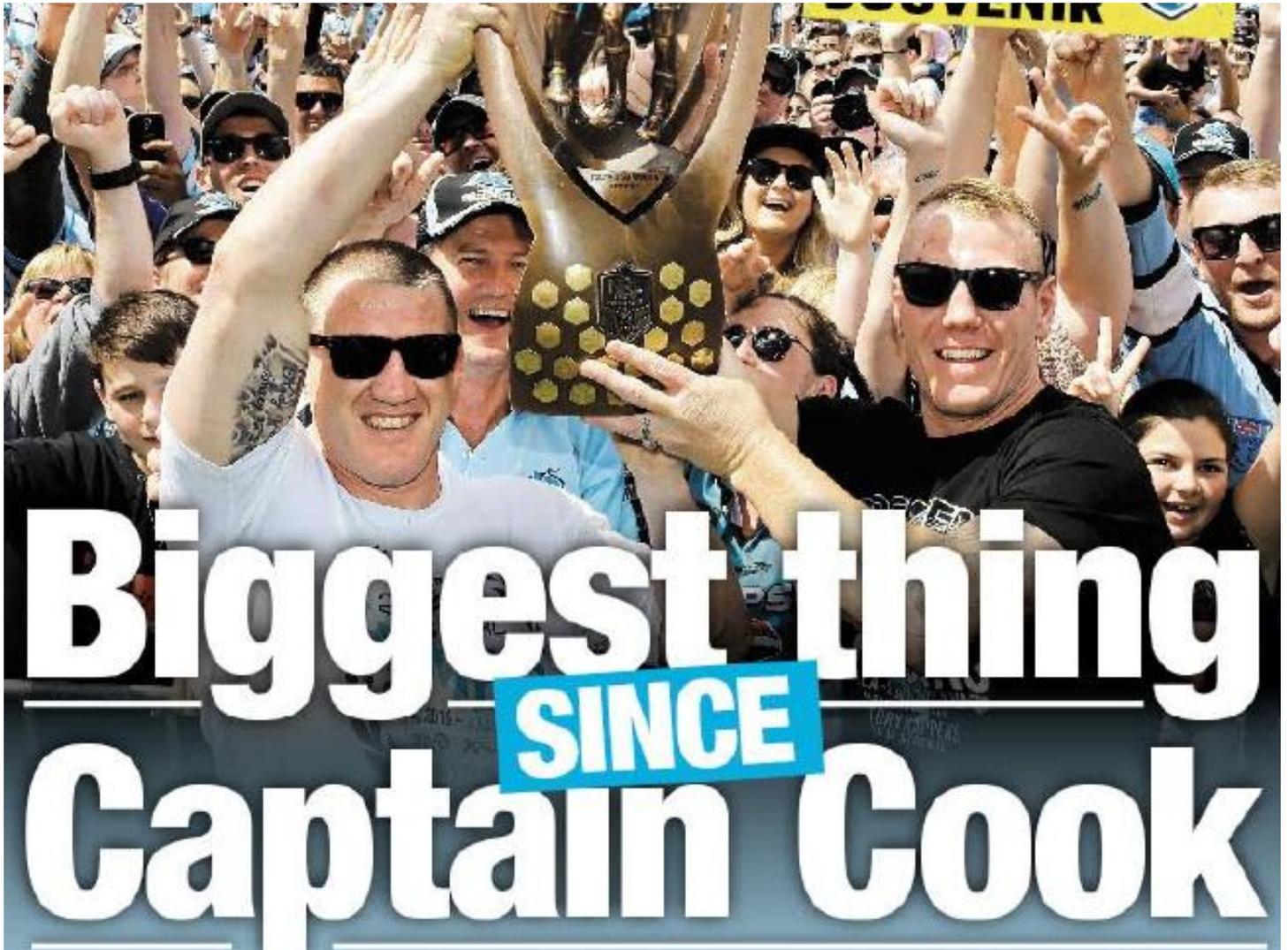
CLAIMS that Australia is a racist country, particularly against Aborigines, are common. What is less common is good evidence to support the claims.

In a speech for National Reconciliation Week, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten spoke of the prevalence of “systemic racism” in Australia but provided no evidence.

Recently, [former league players Larry Corowa and Joe Williams called on indigenous players in the recent NRL to not stand for the anthem](#). Williams is reported to have said: “It would bring all the racism that’s in the closet to the surface.”

Similarly, [Anthony Mundine called on footballers to boycott the Australian national anthem](#). But let’s not boo these sporting heroes lest we be accused of racism.

Even more recently, people took yet more offence with yesterday's headline of "Biggest thing since Captain Cook". Really? That is offensive?



📷 Yesterday's "offensive" headline. Really? This is offensive?

Offence is never given, it has to be taken. So why are some so quick to take offence? Because to feel offended is to feel important. And portraying some word, image, event or headline as racist provides a convenient excuse for being offended.

I am not denying that racism exists in Australia, but is it enough to brand us as a racist country? Some context is needed to answer that question.

Consider this analogy: According to Taronga Conservation Society, there were 33 shark attacks in Australia in 2015. Without context, one might think our beaches are shark-infested.

But are sharks a big risk to safety? It's a safe bet that hundreds of thousands of people swim every year. Many swim several times, thereby increasing their risk of shark attack. Most people's main worry is sunburn, not shark bite. Yes, sharks do attack, but our beaches are generally safe.

It's a similar case with "racist attacks". Knowing how many people have reported being targets of racism in Australia is near useless unless we know the total number of interactions between people of different races — and each day there must be hundreds of thousands. But that doesn't stop people shouting about systemic racism.

So, yes, racism exists, but is it really as prevalent as some like to think?



 Anthony Dillon identifies as a part-Aboriginal Australian and reckons not everything is racist.

Consider the case of indigenous actress Ningali Lawford-Wolf, who claims that late one Saturday night in early 2016 at least four taxi drivers chose not to pick her up because she was an indigenous person. It is certainly possible that racism was at play, however, being refused four times would be a very infrequent occurrence.

So why do some delight in seeing racism around every corner, particularly against indigenous Australians?

Possibly because yelling "racism" takes far less effort than addressing the serious problems that disproportionately affect the indigenous population such as violence, child abuse, unsafe living environments, and suicide.

Yelling “racism” allows one to feel like a moral crusader. It enables crusaders to feel as if they have contributed to solving the serious problems facing indigenous people when, in reality, the problems are like a ticking time bomb.

Let’s call out racism where it exists, but let’s not assume it exists where it doesn’t.

Sport has been wonderful for breaking down barriers and bringing people together. Let’s not use it as a platform for pushing political agendas. This can only keep Australia divided, and for as long as we are divided we are unable to be all that we are capable of being.

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