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KEEP RACISM OUT OF CORONAVIRUS DIALOGUE, DEMOCRACY IN COLOUR URGES

The hysteria around the coronavirus has moved beyond a health issue, says racial and economic justice organisation Democracy in Colour. **The racialised coverage of the virus has increased the level of racism and harassment experienced by Asians in Australia.**

Democracy in Colour National Co-Director, Tim Lo Surdo said, "Racist framing of the coronavirus has enabled racism against Asians throughout the country. We're hearing stories of people being abused on public transport, children being bullied in schools, and even businesses being boycotted all because of their race."

"This sinophobia is horrific but not surprising considering Australia's history. One of the first pieces of legislation post-Federation, the White Australia Policy, was specifically designed to prevent Chinese migration."

Sinophobia is sentiment that is specifically against people from Chinese backgrounds and their cultures.

"It is deeply concerning that the Government's response to dealing with this health issue has been to isolate people coming from China on Christmas Island when we know that there is limited medical infrastructure there already. This goes against all expert advice from medical professionals and just illustrates the Government's utter lack of reason."

"The Prime Minister also announced over the weekend that Chinese tourists will no longer be allowed to come to Australia. It's clear that there is nothing but fear mongering and racism behind this decision."

"Vilifying all Asians as a disease risk, banning Chinese immigration, blaming Chinese people for the virus, promoting racist stereotypes about Chinese eating habits, and hoax health alerts advising people to avoid suburbs that have high Chinese populations are all examples of people exploiting a public health issue to justify the racist beliefs they've always had."

"We need a measured response to coronavirus that doesn't have hysterical, racist undertones to it. We're condemning the politicians who are attempting to use this public health issue to legitimise bigotry and exploit fear throughout the country," said Mr Lo Surdo.

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