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### **Neo-nazi protesters were emboldened by Dutton's post-budget reply**

Extremists are feeling emboldened to spout anti-immigration, racist rhetoric reminding migrants that the dark history of White Australia Policy is a very real part of our present. The neo-nazis on the steps of Parliament House in Melbourne used the same messages as opposition leader Dutton in his budget reply speech on Thursday.

Democracy in Colour National Director, Neha Madhok said "The shameful, racist, neo-nazi protest on Saturday is a symptom of a larger problem. We've known for a long time that when politicians use immigration as a scapegoat to address real problems like the housing crisis, it emboldens racists to protest our existence in this country.

"Opposition leader Dutton used the post-budget response on Thursday to score some cheap political points against migrants who are a part of our communities and contribute enormously to our economy. This kind of strategy lacks any kind of social responsibility and directly contributes to racist incidents like we saw on Saturday.

"There is no doubt about it - we have a housing crisis. We need to look at solutions that reset our broken housing system, not use migrants as political punching bags.

"Everyone in this country, from citizens to people on temporary visas, is trying to survive during this housing crisis. It's lazy and irresponsible for politicians to use migrants as scapegoats to problems such as the housing crisis. It doesn't solve any problems, but instead divides citizens and migrants so they can get away with chronic inaction to systemic failures in our housing system.

"Dog-whistling tactics like using migrants as scapegoats for other issues directly impacts the way migrants live and work in this country. Migrants, especially people of colour, face more racist abuse... When racists see a person of colour, and have heard the racist rhetoric from politicians, they feel confident that they can act with impunity.

"This weekend's neo-nazi protest was a shameful display from people who should never feel empowered to spout hateful and racist rhetoric. We need to demand more from the people in power to address systemic issues like the housing crisis, so that everyone in this country can feel safe to live here and work.

"We're calling on politicians to be held accountable for their political tactics that are steeped in racism to the detriment of our communities. Everyone in our society would be much better served by a government and opposition that actually engaged in the substance of the problems they have contributed to and the solutions that they have the power to enact.

We will continue to see this kind of cheap point-scoring and targeting of our communities, unless we fix the housing system at the core, and ensure that we have a [strong migration system](#) that treats everyone in Australia with dignity." said Neha Madhok.

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*Democracy in Colour is a national racial and economic justice movement of over 16,000 members that advocates for people of colour and multicultural communities across the country. Read more at [democracyincolour.org](http://democracyincolour.org)*