

Media Release



The
Wheeler
Centre
Books
Writing
Ideas

Is this the debate Melbourne had to have?

On 15 June at the Melbourne Town Hall, *Intelligence Squared* asks has Australia failed to escape its racist past.

The debating phenomenon that began in London and took New York and Sydney by storm, returns to Melbourne with a second controversial topic: ***Australia has not escaped its racist past.***

It stings when local and overseas commentators claim that we are fundamentally a racist nation. Recent events, especially violent crimes against Indian students, have escalated criticism. Is it justified?

Arguing for the affirmative, professor of politics and prominent public intellectual **Robert Manne** will be joined by **Gautam Gupta**, founder of the Federation of Indian Students of Australia and **Hanifa Deen**, award-winning author.

On the negative team, columnist and commentator **Dr Tanveer Ahmed** and president of the Australia India Society of Victoria, **Dr Gurdip Aurora** will be joined by **Professor Bob Birrell**, one of Australia's leading social scientists.

Tuesday 15 June 2010, 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Intelligence Squared, Australia has not escaped its racist past

**Melbourne Town Hall, corner of Swanston and Collins Streets, Melbourne
\$30/\$20 concession, bookings through wheelercentre.com**

About *Intelligence Squared*

Intelligence Squared is a provocative and informative series of live debates on hot-button issues. The format is the traditional Oxford-style debate, with one side proposing and the other side opposing a sharply framed motion. Three argue on each side of the motion. After the formal arguments, the debate is thrown open to the floor for moderated questions. The live audience votes on the motion both before and after hearing the arguments, so at each debate there is a clear measure of how far people have actually been swayed. *Intelligence Squared* in Melbourne is a project of the St James Ethics Centre and the Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas.

More about the speakers

Robert Manne is professor of politics at La Trobe University and a regular commentator on politics and current affairs. He is the author and editor of many books, including *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* and *Sending Them Home: Refugees and the New Politics of Indifference*.

Gautam Gupta is secretary of the Federation of Indian Students of Australia and is a commentator on issues affecting the Indian community in Australia.

Hanifa Deen is an award winning author. Her most recent book is *The Jihad Seminar*. She is a former deputy commissioner of Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs in WA and was a director of the SBS Board.

Dr Tanveer Ahmed is a psychiatry registrar and opinion columnist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He sits on the Advertising Standards Board, the advisory council to the Smith Family and is a former national representative for junior doctors within the Australian Medical Association. He has written and spoken widely on the issue of racism.

Dr Gurdip Aurora is president of the Australia India Society of Victoria. He was instrumental in the negotiations with the state government on behalf of Sikhs to allow them to carry the traditional Kirpan (sword) and to exempt them from wearing helmets while cycling. He works at the Angliss hospital and teaches medical students at Melbourne and Monash University.

Professor Bob Birrell is the director of the Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University in Melbourne. He has acted as an advisor on immigration issues to both Labor and Coalition governments. He was a member of the Commonwealth Government's National Population Council from 1987–1993 and the independent Review of the General Skilled Migration Program (2006).

For media enquiries contact Anna Lensky

t: +61 3 9094 7806 m: +61 (0)425 766 780 e: anna.lensky@wheelercentre.com

wheelercentre.com



The Wheeler Centre

A Victorian Government initiative and the centrepiece of Melbourne's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature.