

(Time: 4 mins)

To the members of the committee,

In June this year a light was shone unto the darkest corners of our society here in New South Wales. We thought we lived in a country with a first-world justice system that protected and valued *all* citizens. We felt proud to call ourselves Australian. But the evidence was clear, it was ugly and it made us realise we were wrong. We felt ashamed.

So as individuals, we started doing the work. We've been donating in the hundreds of thousands to First Nations Organisations and taken to the streets to amplify ~~Blak~~ <sup>ENP</sup> voices calling for justice. We're buying from Bla(c)k businesses and we are celebrating First Nations culture. We're learning the true history, and we are sharing our knowledge.

But we can't change the law.

The easiest and most effective way for you to support our work and rebuild public trust in our justice system is to create Independent Investigative Bodies which make individuals working in Correctional Services, in Justice Health and especially in the NSW Police Force accountable for their actions when they violate the rights of citizens.

We don't understand why they, the professionals, are not accountable to the law when they brutalise and neglect us, the citizens. If an act of brutality or a death in police custody can happen to just one person, it can happen to anyone. That makes us, and by us I mean *all* us citizens, feel unsafe.

You can change that.

but it will take humility, perseverance and most of all, it will take courage.

**It will take Courage** to admit that up to this point our justice system has failed First Nations people miserably and by doing so, it has failed every single member of our community regardless of their heritage.

**It will take courage** to consider the violence and violation of human life behind the statistics. It will take courage not to look away.

**It will take courage** to pursue a vision that none of your predecessors could even imagine. To finally take action now, together.

Document tendered by <i>Ms Faith Blak</i>
Received by <i>Taylor Carlin</i>
Date: <i>27/10/20</i>
Resolved to publish Yes / No

**It will take Humility** to recognise the justified anger and the immeasurable grief of all those whose lives are affected by a death in custody.

**It will take humility** to understand that the families, with the overwhelming support of the community, have been calling on you and your predecessors to take action for decades but have been ignored. Just imagine what actions you would have taken if it had been a member of your family, and try not to flinch.

**Finally**, you will need **persistence and perseverance** to regain the trust of the community.

Making good the damage done won't be easy. Luckily for you there are countless community-run and private organisations who can show you the way. A good place to start would be BackTrack Youth Works or Just Reinvest NSW. They have proven success rates that save money, save lives, and help communities thrive. They have paved the way, they simply need your vigilant and unwavering support.

Members of the committee, I understand that this isn't easy - we can't bring back the men and women who have died at the hands of our system. The damage has been done, their rights were violated without remorse, and their families are grieving. The evidence proves irrefutably that Blak lives don't matter. Which means that in the eyes of the law, **our lives don't matter**. It means that **your life** doesn't matter.

We, the citizens of New South Wales, are counting on you to change that. We are watching, we've waited a long time, and we will be holding you *personally* accountable for the actions you make come March next year.