

Persuasive with visual 1

Rather than risk rallies, let's show black lives matter with an eight minute blackout



By Rosalind Dixon and [Richard Holden](#)

NSW again faces a dilemma over whether to allow a second Black Lives Matter protest to go ahead on Saturday. Which is more important - protesting against racism or protecting people against COVID19?

The public health threat is clear: large protests, involving thousands of people in close contact, go against key guidelines we have observed for several months surrounding social distancing. And they do so in ways that make contact-tracing and self-isolation especially challenging.

Yet the case for allowing the protest to go ahead is equally powerful: hundreds of thousands of people around the world have come out to protest against the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police. And their message is clear and persuasive: black Americans have faced a long history of economic and political injustice, and far too little in the way of response and redress.

Australian Black Lives Matter protesters are also making this argument. Indigenous Australians continue to be jailed at much higher rates, are more likely to die in prison and have a shorter

average life-expectancy than non-indigenous Australians. And protesters are calling for urgent action to address this.

How, then, can we resolve this dilemma? One good place to start would be a voluntary eight-minute blackout – this Saturday at 8pm – to show that all Sydneysiders believe that black lives matter. Turning our lights out for this brief time representing the 8 minutes and 46 seconds that it took George Floyd to die under the knee of police officer Derek Chauvin, would show our support for the Black Lives Matter movement while maintaining strict social-distancing.

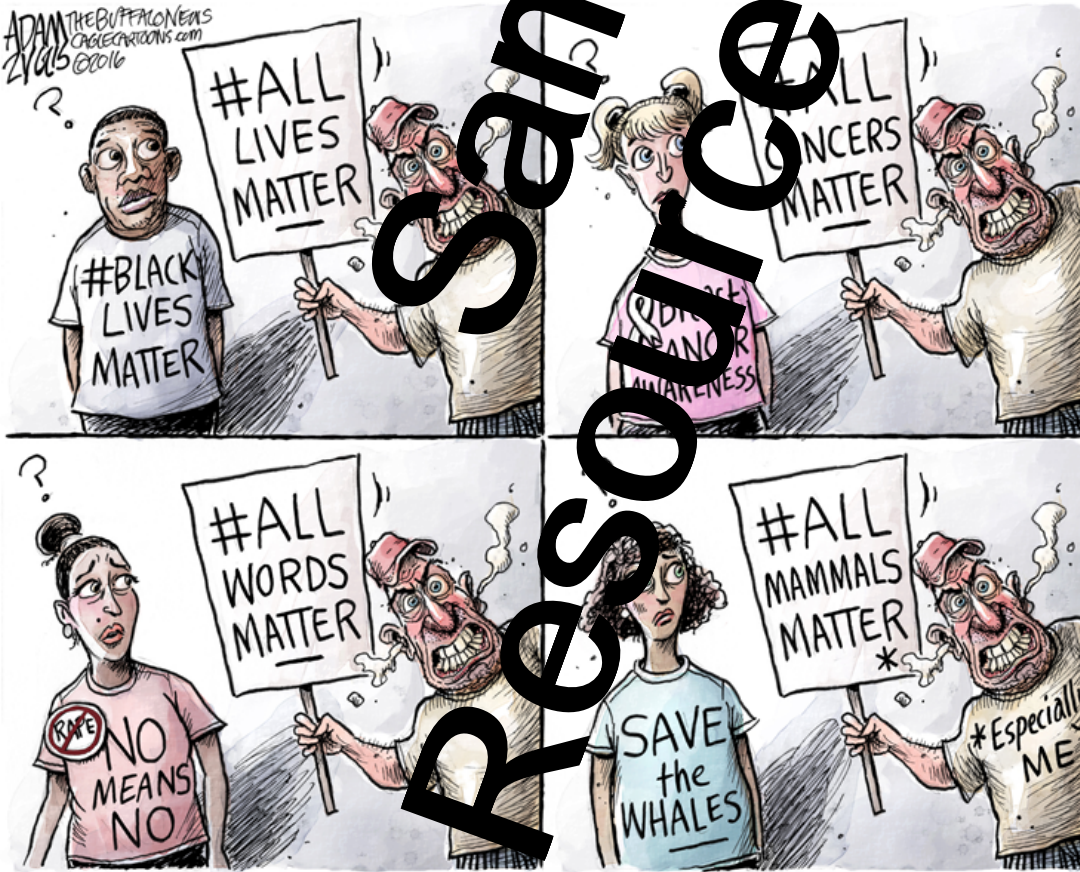
For those minutes, we might reflect on how we can truly move forward from both the pandemic and our own historical failing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As we sit in the dark together, we might reflect on whether it is time to lend our voices to the fight against racism.

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Sample Resource

Persuasive with visual 2

There is a reason this movement is important



Once again, the voice of people fighting against racism is being drowned out by racists. This time, the #BlackLivesMatter movement which seeks to overturn centuries of racist attitudes is being opposed by racists who are calling their movement #AllLivesMatter. They are claiming that all people need to be treated fairly, not just people of colour. The problem with this, is that the people in the #AllLivesMatter movement here in Australia don't actually care about all lives. Just white lives.

It isn't hard to unpick the true beliefs of Australian #AllLivesMatter advocates. They often deny the oppression Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people face. They call for asylum seekers to be sent back "home" despite the high chances of their death. They say our cities are being overrun by "African gangs."

Whenever people have tried to get rid of racist elements of society - like stopping slavery in the 1800s, or giving black people the right to vote in the 1900s - there has always been an opposition. We must be courageous now and see the #AllLivesMatter movement for what it really is - small minded people who just want to keep things the same for a few people, rather than improving things for everyone.

By Jeremy Rabaut, The Age, 28 June