



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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READERS' VIEWS

Dear Editor

It is obvious from Mr Davies' letter in Vol.14 No.2, April/May '86, p.45, of The Aboriginal Child at School, that he missed the point of Dr Christie's article 'What is a part-Aborigine?' that human identity has nothing to do with skin colour. An extract from Eve Fesl's paper "How the English Language is Used to Put Australians Down, Deny Us Rights, or Is Employed as a Political Tool Against Us" supports this point:

'Part-, "Quarter-, "Half-caste," Full-blood'

Everybody in Australia is racially mixed, so why are Aborigines singled out to be divided into part-, quarter-, half-caste or full-blood? (These are not translations from our languages).

The fact is that these terms were used, and still are used in an attempt to divide and rule us.

These terms are extremely racist, as they were first applied because white people believed that they were superior to us and that if we had some white racial mixture, we were better than those Aborigines who had a very dark skin colouring.

On the basis of the belief in white superiority, children with fairer skin were taken from their parents and raised in institutions away from them.

For a while even some of us were convinced that to be black or dark was to be inferior. However, 1967 saw an awareness and confidence in being black begin to develop. The saying "Black is Beautiful" began to be used. Aborigines regardless of skin colouring got together to work for the benefit of our people throughout Australia.

*Because we all got together, the racists and some politicians are now trying to divide us again, this time by telling us that the very dark people are the Aborigines and that for an Aborigine to be fairer in colouring is to be inferior or not *real*.*

One has to be very wary of non-Aborigines who use these terms. Some Aborigines have mistakenly picked up the terms also. They should be reminded of these facts, as they are falling into the racists' trap.

The book, *Recovery*, by C.D. Rowley, is also excellent in this regard.

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