



21 JUN, 2020

Anti-vaxxers hijack a movement for justice

Sunday Mail Brisbane, Brisbane

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Anti-vaxxers hijack a movement for justice

These hypocrites are putting the lives of children at risk

SURELY there is no greater hypocrisy than anti-vaxxers taking to the streets to protest that black lives matter?

As if manipulating legitimate pandemic fear and perpetuating lies (such as the 446,000 people killed by COVID-19 “didn’t actually die”) was not repulsive enough, the anti-vaxx movement is now exploiting a historic social movement for equality and justice to push their own selfish and dangerous agenda.

“You know who else cannot breathe? Children with anaphylactic reactions to vaccines,” outspoken vaccine-denier Toby Rogers, a former research student from the University of Sydney’s School of Social and Political Science, wrote on Twitter.

Others have picked up the “defund police” chant but amended it to “defund big pharma”.

Government policy to protect public health with safe vaccines is not the same as a US police officer killing a black man with his knee on his neck.

Yet, somehow it is acceptable to co-opt global outrage over black deaths as a way to reinforce the unhinged anti-vaxx movement.

In Byron Bay, capital of Australia’s

anti-vaxx heartland, more than 5000 people peacefully marched the streets earlier this month.

It is a district that includes Mullumbimby which boasts an immunisation rate of just 48.4 per cent among two year olds and 52 per cent among five year olds, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

This is compared to an immunisation rate of 93.5 per cent nationally and 95.7 per cent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Northern NSW will also be the launch site of the conspiracy-theory organisation Australian Vaccination Network’s Vaxxed II bus, which will tour to south-east Queensland from next month, inciting parents to blame vaccines for their children’s health and development issues.

Yet if they are truly devoted to the pursuit of truth, shouldn’t these protesters change their placards to “no” lives matter?

For how can a community that nurtures the deadly dangers of anti-vaccination claim to care about lives?

It’s as baffling in its contradiction as their redneck “corona scamdemic” compatriots in the US, who armed with semiautomatic weapons, push the conflicting arguments of anti-abortion and anti-vaccination.

These anti-vaxxers may go to bed tucked up in their flax linen sheets after a cup of chaga mushroom tea

content in the deluded self assurance

that they are enlightened, open-hearted warriors.

But for the rest of us (with an education, critical thinking and common sense), the reality is clear: they are blatant hypocrites.

No amount of sage smudging can mask their selfish narrow-minded quackery and lack of concern for the safety and protection of the community. Just as disturbing and terrifying is the way they talk about children with autism.

Indisputable, peer-reviewed research, including one study of more than half a million children, has repeatedly proven that vaccines do not cause autism. But anti-vaxxers ignore the truth.

They continue to peddle this discredited lie, even dementedly abusing vaccine supporter senator Hollie Hughes and blaming her for her son’s au-

tism. They claim people with autism are broken, damaged and unhealthy and would prefer children die than be autistic.

But replace autistic with the word black and it’s hate speech.

When it comes to autism discrimination, anti-vaxxers are bigots who use “freedom of choice” as a cover for their prejudice. “Using autism as a bogeyman in this ridiculous fight is just abominable,” Autism Awareness Australia chief executive Nicole Rogerson told me.

“How many times do we have to say there is no link between vaccines



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and autism, but they don't listen to the science.

"They think people like me are bought by big pharma which is hilarious. It's moronic.

"And what they are saying about people with autism and their families is offensive."

Anti-vaxxers need to ask themselves if the life of Perth baby Riley Hughes who died at just 32 days old from whooping cough mattered?

Or Brisbane newborn Dana, who died of the same vaccine-preventable disease?

What about six-month-old Jasmine from Adelaide, who died in her father's arms from pneumococcal disease? Or Laine Bradley, from northern NSW, who died from measles complications at the age of seven?

And were the 396 people who died from meningococcal in Australia between 1996 and 2017, including one third of those aged under five, not important?

Apparently not.

And that is the terrifying antagonism of anti-vaxxers attempting to hijack this protest movement.

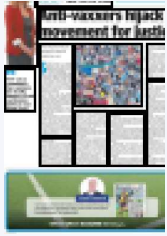
You cannot be anti-vaxx and pretend that black lives, or any lives, matter.

You either want people to live or you want them to die. Pick a side.

LUCY CARNE IS EDITOR OF RENDEZ-VIEW.COM.AU



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