



**Stan Grant**

## Stan Grant faced 'unrelenting racism', fellow ABC panellists say, as scale of conservative coverage revealed

**Data suggests Sky News and the Australian mentioned the ABC's coverage of Charles III's coronation more than 150 times in the past two weeks**

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The pro-monarchy Liberal party MP Julian Leeser has said fellow ABC coronation panellist **Stan Grant** faced “unrelenting racism online” in response to the broadcast, as data suggests Sky News and the Australian mentioned the coverage more than 150 times in the past two weeks.

On Friday, **Grant announced he would walk away from hosting Q+A** after this Monday's episode following what he said was the media lying and distorting his words while criticising the ABC's coverage of Charles III's coronation.

“I was not the producer nor presenter of the coronation broadcast yet every newspaper article accusing the ABC of bias has carried my image,” Grant wrote for the ABC on Friday. “I am writing this because I will not have people depict me as a person of hate.”

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Leeser, a fellow panellist for the ABC’s coverage of the coronation, posted on Facebook the day after the broadcast that he was deeply concerned about the online commentary and that he was “appalled at the sustained online racism” Grant had faced.

On Saturday, Leeser told Guardian Australia that Grant faced “unrelenting racism” and that while he disagrees with Grant on a number of things, he admires the broadcaster.

“I wanted to say you can disagree with someone but also stand for their right to speak as well as affirm who they are,” Leeser said.

“I disagree with Stan on a number of things, but I admire what he has achieved - I find what he writes rich, beautiful and thought provoking, even if often I form different conclusions.

“In public life you have to contend for your views but you shouldn’t have to contend for who you are.”

ABC journalist Julia Baird and the co-chair of the Australian Republican Movement, Craig Foster, who were both panellists on the segment of the coronation broadcast featuring Grant also voiced support for him on Saturday.

Stan Grant is a brilliant, uniquely insightful, valued colleague. His words about our colonial past during our coronation coverage were open, powerful & true - none of the attacks queried accuracy. But the vitriol was disgusting. Many have just queried his right to speak at all.

– 🌸Dr 🌸 Julia Baird (@bairdjulia) May 20, 2023

Baird described the racist vitriol against Grant as “disgusting” and said: “His words about our colonial past during our coronation coverage were open, powerful and true.”

Foster pointed out he had not been subjected to the same attacks as Grant had been, and said the treatment of Grant was “utterly shameful. But not unexpected and not uncommon.”

My thoughts on the shameful, relentless racial vilification of leading First Nations journalist, Stan Grant and his subsequent resignation from Q&A.

It only strengthens the need for change. [pic.twitter.com/qXhufWHmck](https://pic.twitter.com/qXhufWHmck)

— Craig Foster (@Craig\_Foster) May 19, 2023

“I would never suffer the same criticism, abuse, twisting of words or intent or racial vilification as First Nations people so courageously open themselves to,” Foster said.

The ABC’s panel discussion went for 45 minutes in the lead-up to the coronation, and was over hours before the event itself.

In the broadcast, Grant pointed out that the crown represents the invasion and theft of Aboriginal land.

Media data provided to the Guardian found that there were more than 150 mentions of the ABC’s coronation coverage by the Australian and Sky News in the two weeks since the broadcast.

That included 18 mentions in the Australian online, four on Chris Kenny’s program, three on Sky News’s media show, and two each on Bernadi, Outsiders and Paul Murray Live.

That coverage included the Australian’s media writer Sophie Elsworth on Kenny’s show describing the ABC broadcast as a “pile-on” and “hate-fest”. Outsiders hosts Rita Panahi and James Morrow said the ABC’s broadcast was “over the top”, “race-obsessed” and a “woke bin fire of self loathing”.

The ABC did not specifically call out Sky News or the Australian over their coverage, but a spokesperson for the ABC indicated that the ongoing coverage of the broadcast could “clearly generate or contribute to fuelling abuse” that had led to racist attacks on social media.

“If not handled carefully and responsibly, media coverage can also platform and amplify abuse, making it even more damaging for individuals,” the spokesperson said.

Guardian Australia has sought comment from Sky News and News Corp.

The ABC has reported the online abuse directed at Grant to police, with the director of ABC News, Justin Stevens, saying on Friday that Grant had been subjected to “grotesque racist abuse, including threats to his safety”.

“This has become particularly virulent since he appeared as part of the ABC’s coronation coverage,” Stevens said. “It is abhorrent and unacceptable.”

The ABC also lodged an official complaint with Twitter about the “relentless racial filth” Grant was subjected to after every episode of Q+A. Twitter has been contacted for comment but has no real Australian presence since Elon Musk took ownership of the company.

Data from the eSafety commissioner states Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience online hate speech at more than double (33%) the national average in Australia (14%).

A spokesperson for the commissioner said: “At a minimum, platforms should be enforcing their own terms of service to detect and stamp out targeted abuse.

“But they also need to start taking responsibility for the weaponisation of their platforms by those who wish to target individuals and groups in this way.”

ABC and other media colleagues **have expressed support for Grant** since his announcement on Friday.

ABC radio host Patricia Karvelas tweeted she had “felt sick about the racial abuse Stan Grant has experienced and the bullying from media that should know better”.

Journalist Tracey Spicer said the aim of bigots was to silence powerful voices.

The ABC ombudsman is investigating complaints from pro-monarchy groups about the coronation broadcast. It is not clear when the ombudsman will report back.

**This article was amended on 22 May 2023. An earlier version stated that the data about the number of mentions of the ABC’s coronation coverage by the Australian and Sky News in the two weeks since the broadcast was obtained from media monitoring firm Stroom. We wish to clarify that the information was not provided to the Guardian by Stroom but obtained from a third party source.**

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Back in May 2013, when I joined Guardian Australia as founding political editor, I wanted to be part of a project that brought a new, independent, fierce and progressive voice to one of the most heavily concentrated media markets in the world.