



QPASTT

Queensland program of assistance
to survivors of torture and trauma

QPASTT STATEMENT - COVID-19 media reporting and its impact on Queenslanders from African backgrounds

5th August 2020

The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) is very concerned with the anxiety, fear and stigma caused to all Queenslanders from African backgrounds by the recent media reports, including the naming and shaming, of two African Australian young women accused of breaching COVID-19 restrictions in Queensland.

Those who contravene restrictions should face the consequences of course. But the treatment of these young women in the media, which has been different from others who have been also caught breaching restrictions, has resulted in the otherisation of people of colour, fear-based racism and xenophobic behaviour. This has reinforced the sentiment that young people from African backgrounds need to continually prove their right to call Australia home, questioning their identity and their right to belong. Many who fled their country of origin due to violence and persecution, and have experienced trauma as a result, have been retriggered by this situation.

Releasing the young women's personal information has not only had an impact on themselves, their families and communities, but has also undermined the effective public health advocacy and awareness efforts with new and emerging communities to understand the current COVID-19 situation, and the need for testing and community responsibility. The biased media coverage has hurt us all.

QPASTT strongly condemns all forms of racism, cyberbullying, victimisation and mistreatment of people from all backgrounds.

We stand in solidarity with all Queenslanders from African backgrounds who are an integral part of our diverse and vibrant Queensland community.