

# **RECLAIM REASON**

Tackling the arguments of the  
Reclaim Australia movement

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## BACKGROUND

The Reclaim Australia movement launched itself into a true-blue-Aussie-pride existence in April 2015. The movement is based around loose ideas that Islam is a threat to the Australian way of life, compelling their followers to believe a fraction of the cost of the Halal-certified chocolate that they buy is perhaps being funnelled by turban-wearing mice through an invisible underground network straight into the hands of a suicide bomber whose bombs will wipe out all Christian churches in Australia and replace them with Islamic courts which will swiftly take over the nation and have us all wearing burqas, speaking Arabic and praying to Allah.



But jokes aside, movements like this are extremely dangerous and damaging to communities. They incite fear against scapegoats instead of offering real solutions or explanations for issues the world faces today, and this fear rapidly turns to hysteria, hatred and violence.

It is unfounded and we wanted to demonstrate how poorly thought out and misdirected the Reclaimers 24-point demands are through a brief critique of each argument.

This zine was written by two local anarchists. To learn more about the counter-movement or to get involved in long-term struggles against racism, bigotry and other forms of oppression in our society, or to ask any questions, contact us at [oppose.bigots@gmail.com](mailto:oppose.bigots@gmail.com)

## RECLAIMERS FIRST DEMAND:

**Our right to peaceful assembly. This right was denied to Australians at the Melbourne Reclaim on April 4th.**

(This refers to a conflict between Reclaim Australia rally members and those involved in a counter rally, the claim implies the presence of a counter rally restricted the public actions of Reclaim Australia)

Firstly, let's remember that a counter rally itself is an expression of peaceful assembly. Just as some people can say what they think, others can disagree and assemble in the same space. "Our" right means everyone's right, including those opposing.

More importantly, let's put the counter rallies in context by noting that the assemblies of Reclaim Australia are clearly not peaceful. The Reclaimers use Muslims as scapegoats for broad economic problems around the world, blaming all followers of one religion for the violence and extremism of few, often in turn the result of extreme poverty, exploitation and oppression.

We should be uniting to combat these issues, but hate speech and vilification of religious groups leads to violence, bigotry, racism and broken communities.

When Reclaimers are opposed by us, it is not peaceful assembly that is denied, but peace on the street that is protected.



## **RECLAIMERS SECOND DEMAND:**

**Australia's interests first, over all other nations.**

"Australia" is a nation brutally enforced onto the traditional owners of the land. To demand Australia's interests first is to further ignore the interests of first nations people and demonstrates the Reclaimers lack of understanding and care for the decolonisation struggle.

Additionally, Australia is not a unified entity; it is made up of both the exploiters and the exploited. To end exploitation and create a better world, we must act for the exploited, low-waged, marginalised and oppressed. The fiction of a united country actually serves the exploiters by dividing the exploited into "us" and "them", so a unified struggle against exploitation can never eventuate.

Similarly, nationalism justifies global exploitation and leads to worldwide division between countries. Subscribing to ideas that our nation's interests trump those of others is damaging to the planet and all species, including us.

## **RECLAIMERS THIRD DEMAND:**

**Equality at law. No more "cultural considerations".**

All law must be informed by cultural considerations, even if the rule of law will violate these considerations to keep the economy running. What is considered decent, proper, consensually acceptable and unacceptable are simply cultural norms. By nature these norms vary across times and places.

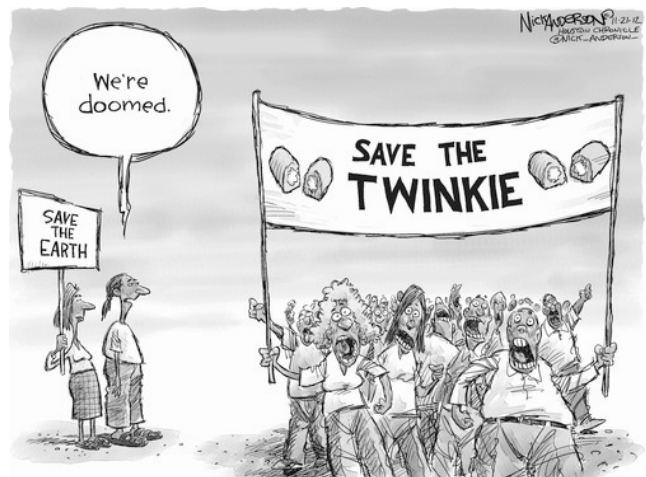
Supposing that Reclaim are implying that Muslims are granted cultural considerations to allow them concessions in Australian law, this simply has no basis in fact. Regardless of religious belief, we are all held to the same laws in Australia. Any inequality of treatment by the law due to race or religion tends to work *against* minorities, for example Aboriginal people are 14.8 times more likely to be imprisoned for a crime than non-Aboriginal people.

## RECLAIMERS FOURTH DEMAND:

**Democracy over political correctness. One person, one vote – majority rule.**

Reclaim Australia are in fact a small minority, so majority rules may not actually work in their favour. Even if it did, what the majority wants is not automatically desirable. Majority wishes could easily ignore the voices of a minority which may have special needs and make special contributions to everyone's lives.

Imagine there was a steep footpath which the majority of commuters had to walk down each day, and on this street lived five people in wheelchairs who also commuted to work as doctors and lab technicians on this footpath. The majority complain that it's strenuous walking down the slope, and would be easier if stairs were put in. A vote is cast, and the majority rules. It is now slightly easier for them to walk to work, but *impossible* for the minority, with consequent negative effects when the minority cannot carry out their work. Since the vote forgoes other superior solutions such as a dual ramp/stairs scenario, this response cannot be justified, even though the majority wanted it and it suits them fine.



Majority rules can also be abused by those with the power to manipulate the public, for instance at one point in the later 1940s the majority of Australians supported a massive expansion of the nuclear industry.

Reclaim Australia decries one section of the community instead of advocating for community action based on informed dialogue, taking into account the needs of both the majority AND the minorities.

## RECLAIMERS FIFTH DEMAND:

**Freedom for service people to wear uniforms in public, safely – on and off duty.**

Service people should always remain safe. The proper way to ensure this is to build a peace movement, the only movement that really cares about service people since it is the only movement actively campaigning to stop them getting their heads blown off. Peace movements are by nature international and in solidarity with overseas peace movements. This is at odds with the nationalistic and anti-Muslim charter of Reclaim Australia.



## RECLAIMERS SIXTH DEMAND:

**Freedom to attend our public functions without fear of terrorism**

Terrorism is currently not the primary threat to Australians, or anyone. Compared to road safety, domestic violence being the leading cause of death for Australian women under 45, industrial accidents and so on, terrorism is small fry. The terror that does exist is often a media beat-up (no charges laid after high profile raids). It is sometimes even the result of police operations then beat up by media.<sup>1</sup>



Throw mud and it sticks, even if it wasn't fair to throw it in the first place. The media are owned by our exploiters and all these exploiters want is for us to be divided so we cannot struggle against exploitation.

Before leaving this point let us consider tragic cases that do exist like Martin Place or Bali, and also preventing

future terror acts. As opposed to bigotry, solidarity among the exploited will more productively allow us to fight the conditions that create terrorism: poverty, war, oppression etc. Reclaim wishes to fight against rather than unite with different communities to work towards productive social struggle.

1. Much-maligned Zaky Mallah was proven in court to have been set up by police when young and vulnerable (2003). He is not a terrorist, but a patsie who has since done aid work for Muslim communities. Equally some of the 911 terrorists seem to have been manipulated extremists. While hard to prove, these suspicions provide a secondary approach to terrorism, incompatible with militaristic Reclaim but compatible with the class struggle approach. The suspicions add weight to the existing demand for transparency and much-needed down-sizing of secret policing

## **RECLAIMERS SEVENTH DEMAND:**

**Our food to be free of religious taxes to other nations, blessings and certifications.**

Though it seems quite important to Reclaim, this demand is hard for anyone outside Reclaim to understand. One idea is that businesses providing Halal certification fund terrorism, and another is that the annual cost for Halal certification is passed on to the customer. These claims are straightforward enough, but there is no evidence for either.

### Funding Terrorism



There is absolutely no evidence or reason to suspect that Halal businesses fund terrorism. They are Australian businesses governed under the same laws, reporting obligations and investigations as any other business.

### Increasing Costs

As for passing on the costs, a product purchasing Halal certification instantly broadens its market not only in Australia, but around the world, and the annual cost is quickly absorbed by this increase in profits.

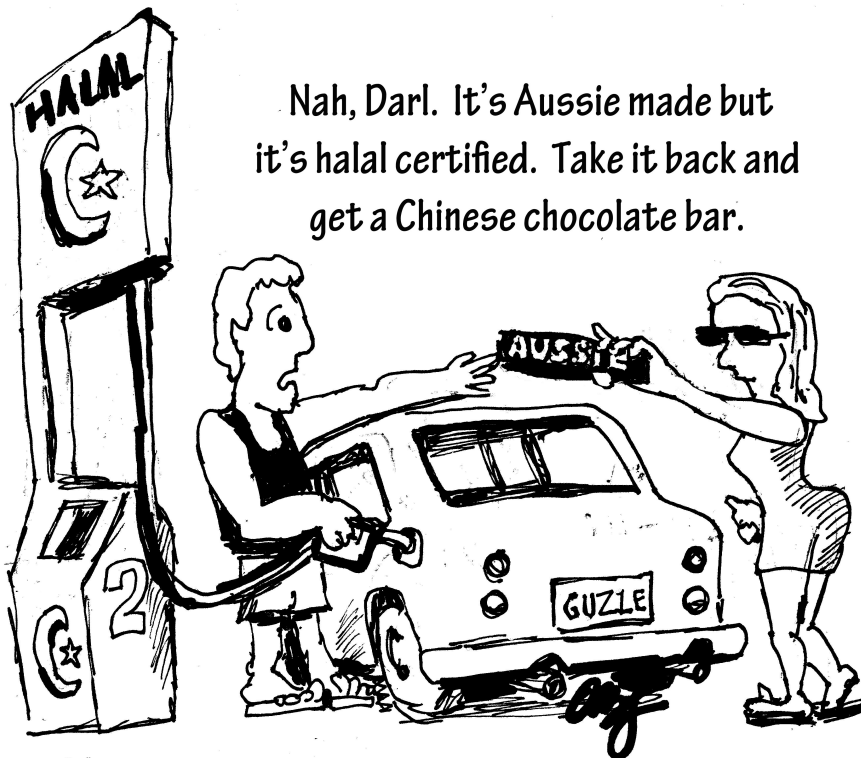


## Treatment of Animals

Another objection to Halal certification is that religious requirements involve a change in the way animals are stunned before they are slaughtered. This procedure is not recommended by the RSPCA as there is an increased (but small) risk that the animal will remain conscious. In this case, there may be some validity in opposing Halal meat. But targeting Halal certification in general is misleading.

## Business As Usual

It is also an absurd belief that a religious community which is so small in Australia could actually influence the entire food market and force businesses to take on Halal certification against their will. Most food is made for profit and only concerns of profitability govern its certification.



Nah, Darl. It's Aussie made but  
it's halal certified. Take it back and  
get a Chinese chocolate bar.

Profit if you do, profit if you don't!

**I LOST 4 KILO'S**



**By Saying**

**NO**

**To halal certified foods**

**This diet is a life changer !**

**Boycott Halal in Australia  
And watch the kilo's come off**

## **RECLAIMERS EIGHTH DEMAND:**

**Equality of gender. No individual will have their rights diminished due to their gender.**

Gender equality is not a Muslim issue; it is a global cross-cultural issue affecting all religious and secular peoples. Gender oppression is severe in mainstream Australia as well. Women are being murdered by their “loved ones” or exes at a rate of 1 per week in Australia, with domestic violence being the leading cause of death in women under 45.

It is certainly true that in some Muslim countries women are brutally oppressed, for example, in Saudi Arabia women are legally restricted from driving a car. However, similar and worse laws exist in Christian countries, like Liberia, Central Africa and the Congo. What most countries with extreme abuse of women’s rights have in common is extreme poverty, class disparity, corruption and often a history of exploitation and abuse from more powerful nations (colonialism).

Capitalism requires the oppression of women to reproduce the labour force both daily and over generations. This includes cleaning, fucking, cooking, caring, child bearing and rearing, as well as maybe having a job. The cause is not Islam, but the dictates of economic competition. Despite liberal rhetoric to the contrary, gendered hierarchical power is inherent in the market. The way to oppose it is then to oppose capitalism, compulsive family relations and exploitative work.

## **RECLAIMERS NINTH DEMAND:**

**Individual sovereignty. People are free to choose partners, their religion and mix with others.**

We should struggle so individuals can make their own choices about their personal and spiritual life. Reclaim is directly working against choice, since they are fighting against Islamic practices in Australia - a religion followed by around 1.5 billion people worldwide and almost 500,000 Australians. How many individuals are they denying this freedom of choice to? The xenophobic tensions created by Reclaim around the nation will lead to 500,000 Australian citizens feeling they are **not** free to practice their religion.

In a broader sense, our choice of partners is often influenced by a perceived need for wealth or security. This is in response to poverty and exploitation, not due to our desires. This cross-cultural phenomenon is best explained by an economic system that is cross-cultural too: capitalism. It is through exploitation and oppression that capitalism generates insecurity, which can only be opposed by broad and inclusive social struggle.

## RECLAIMERS TENTH DEMAND

### **Equality and tolerance of races and religions includes Aussies and Christians.**

It's true that Christians have faced discrimination and violent attacks in recent times, though not really in Australia. These attacks have been characterised by scapegoating, as social problems and environmental problems emerge more starkly and almost every social identity gets a turn at being the punching bag.

In all cases this scapegoating fails to locate the source of social ills – the bosses who attack civil liberties in order to make profits. Profit exists due to exploitation and we must stand united with all different ethnic and religious groups in solidarity to strengthen our communities against exploitation, violence and hatred of any kind.

Reclaim incites hatred towards people of the Muslim faith. This is not the way to protect “Aussies” and Christians - hatred and ignorance leads to greater exploitation and unsafe societies for everybody.



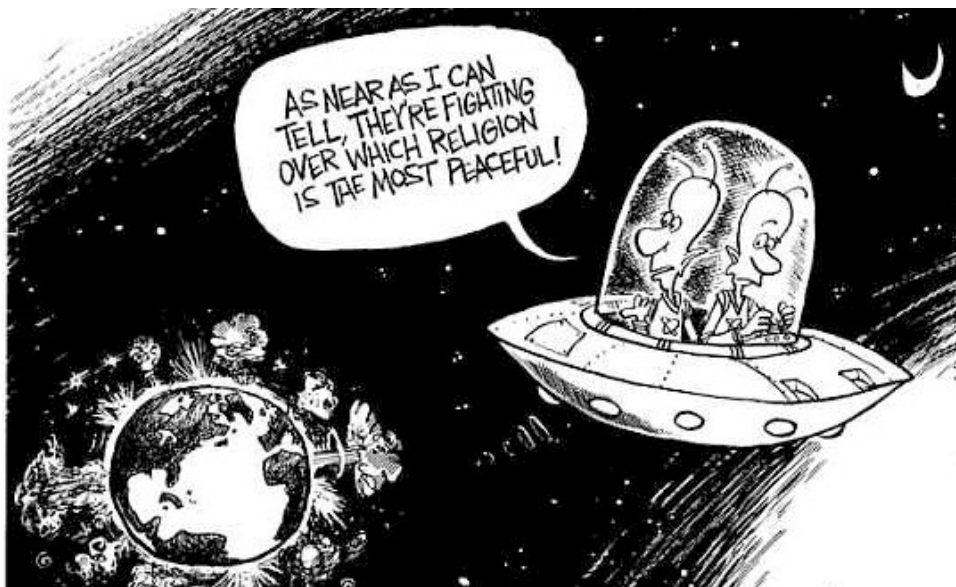
## RECLAIMERS ELEVENTH DEMAND

**Separation of state and religion - all religions must adhere to the laws of the land.**

All religions must adhere to the laws of the land - already! Since the end of medieval times, no religious group can have authority over current laws, since these laws now exist to facilitate the making of profits, not prophets.

However, where religious values do assist in exploitation, especially of women, these values (Christian in Australia) have influence over the state. This is evident in law-making debates regarding homosexual rights or abortion legislation. Here religion facilitates exploitation and forces one brand of religious values on all people, regardless of their beliefs.

Reclaim are focusing only on laws related to Muslim religious practices and not questioning the influence of Christian values on law-making in Australia. It is clear they are only trying to minimise the rights of one religious group over others, and vilify a religious group by falsely implying they are acting outside of the law. While some Islamic communities have their own "courts", these are similar to a Christian couple going to a priest for advice if they were suffering marital problems, before taking the issues to a formalised court of law. Jewish communities also have courts like these - it is simply a way for people to seek advice from their community leaders rather than going through processes which may be costly, not culturally sensitive or simply unnecessary for their needs.



## **RECLAIMERS TWELTH DEMAND**

**Freedom of speech. Truth must prevail over “offence” in legislation.  
18C to be removed.**

Section 18C of the racial discrimination act makes it unlawful to commit an act in public which is deemed likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate other people, and the act is done because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the person. You can be as racist as you like in your own home, but if you’re in a public place and speaking loudly enough for others to hear you, or if you’re publishing something on a public forum, Australian law states it is an offence.

In a society the current authors are proposing, we wouldn’t need laws telling us not to use hate speech or not to be racist. Instead public acts of hate and racism would be safely open to criticism and matters would be settled through logically regulated discussion and appeal to evidence, not through the force of law. But to begin by removing legislation like 18C is to begin in exactly the wrong place, even though we do not believe 18C to be terribly effective in preventing racism. It would be self-defeating to remove those background conditions that assist, however remotely, or even just do not hinder, the kind of discussion which will allow us to regulate our social relations in an improved manner.

Reclaim’s existing desire to remove 18C is an indication of a racist power base within the movement, one they have denied.

## **RECLAIMERS THIRTEENTH DEMAND**

**Free from intimidation for carrying our flag, being white, Christian or for the style of our dress.**

Many people proudly display the flag on their cars, businesses and homes. Look at events like Australia Day where there are so many flags you get literally starry-eyed – by white stars on a blue background.

The notion that white Christians carrying an Australian flag are under any threat of intimidation in Australia is ridiculous, and just an attempt by Reclaim to profit from unfounded panic. If you stop to consider both the evidence and the trends you realise it is ridiculous to think anyone is

going to be rounded up by some kind of Muslim SS for wearing thongs and board shorts. (Perhaps, though, a non-denominational fashion police might not be such a bad idea...just jokes).

The panic Reclaim cynically invokes to gain popularity in reality winds up being a vague unease about a threat to culture when there are already many people living in this country who adhere to different cultural values and practice these without enforcing anything on the mainstream.



## **RECLAIMERS FOURTEENTH DEMAND**

**English as the primary language for schools and public events held in Australia.**

English is the primary language in Australia, there is no need to “reclaim” this. Indeed due to global economic pressures where it has become a trade cant, it is unlikely English would ever lose its position of dominance. People are taught languages at school not solely because of their prevalence in the country, but also because of their usefulness on a global scale. Even Muslim states where fundamentalism has a hold use English to remain economically competitive.

Whether this should be the case is another question. We believe more funding should be available for students to learn other languages if they desire, including Arabic languages. It is also crucial to remember that English is not the “mother tongue” of this land, and Aboriginal

languages have been mostly lost through cultural genocide at the hands of English speakers. We should be talking about strengthening the first nations cultures and peoples, not keeping the colonisers on a pedestal.

## **RECLAIMERS FIFTEENTH DEMAND**

**The right to revoke citizenship, exile or deport traitors.**

“Traitor” is a loaded and ambiguous term. As a result we have no idea to whom Reclaim is referring. We can assume they mean people who commit acts of terrorism.

Now, where exactly do Reclaim propose people go after their citizenship has been revoked and we’ve booted them out of the “lucky country”? It’s completely immature to suggest we dump unwanted on other countries rather than dealing with problems that arise in our own society ourselves.

If Reclaim are proposing some kind of capital punishment/extermination/camp system, aside from anything else, these measures have been shown again and again to spread violence back into the society. This society is only supposedly “outside” or “protected by” the barbed wire of such brutal institutions.

## **RECLAIMERS SIXTEENTH DEMAND**

**The right to celebrate our traditions and holidays: Anzac Day, Easter, Christmas.**

Once again, this is an example of Reclaim Australia planting unfounded fears that mainstream culture is under threat (from a whopping 2.2% of the population). Not only are all these holidays nationally recognised public holidays, but an SBS reporter was recently fired for expressing his own negative views (historically correct) about ANZAC Day on his own personal twitter profile.

Considering the fact that these traditions don't actually represent the views and culture of all Australians, surely a more appropriate call would be for national holidays to be recognised for the special occasions of ALL religious groups represented in our population, not just the dominant one. Or better yet, for each person to govern their own lives according to their own beliefs, instead of being forced to acknowledge holidays of any religion and culture they are not part of through national dictates.

But let us consider the existing system of exploitation. No worker of any religion would want to lose existing holidays. Currently the fight is on to keep penalty rates, and there have been some attacks on holidays. These attacks come from the bosses motivated by economics, not by religion.

## **RECLAIMERS SEVENTEENTH DEMAND**

### **The Constitution and true representation in Government.**

Someone is stealing our constitution!?! No. The constitution is not under threat so there's no need to "reclaim" it. As for representation in Government, we can assume this statement implies that the government is not truly representing the interests of the people, which is absolutely true! However, it is ludicrous to think this has anything to do with Islam.



The voting process in Australia claims to be democratic, but can we really call it a democracy when the winning political party is almost always the one with the most money backing their campaign? Or when the party gets in based on promises which they swiftly break? Until we can remove the overpowering influence of an owning class we will never have true representation in government.



## RECLAIMERS EIGHTEENTH DEMAND

### **Australia's sovereignty at law, over all other nations and the U.N.**

It is easy to be surprised by the sheer naivety of Reclaim. It is true there is currently no sense in which Australia is sovereign. But that is due to the fact that global economics dictate Australia's internal and external affairs.



We certainly can and should fight these dictates, though it seems simply empty to say we would do so for Australia, which is merely a construct of the colonisers. Aboriginal sovereignty was never ceded, we should fight for their sovereignty for the sake of the land, the indigenous and their caretaker ethic, for

more creative relations with each other, and in general for a better life for all. But this struggle would need to come from a united movement, not a working class divided further by racism. The concept of a sovereign Australia as invoked by Reclaim is far from useful here, with historical roots in genocidal colonisers and bureaucratic organising supporting capitalist exploitation.

## RECLAIMERS NINETEENTH DEMAND

### **Separation of religion and state - our right to be guided by our own moral compass, free from state dictates like "political correctness".**

This is very similar to point 11. In context the target seems to be anti-discrimination laws covering workplaces, public spaces and publications. Other bigots have had trouble here, for instance holocaust deniers in some cases face court after heavy criticism by historians and the general public.

As stated in point 12, in our ideal society, we wouldn't need laws telling us how to communicate with or about each other. But the way towards

this society is not through removing laws which put bureaucratic band-aids on victims of discrimination, but through building a self-governed society in which hate speech is critically addressed through community discussion and action and a culture is built in which hatred is understood by all to be unnecessary and damaging, making laws like this redundant.

## **RECLAIMERS TWENTIETH DEMAND**

### **Recognition and respect of Australia's Indigenous community and their requirements.**

The fact that Reclaim call for Australian sovereignty over all nations, not only shows they either don't recognise the Aboriginal nations or believe Australia (the colonisers' construct) should be prioritised, but also shows that they have no awareness of the fight for Aboriginal sovereignty. They call for continuation of colonisation: more Christianity, more English, more whiteness, not for decolonisation. Suggestions that they have any idea about the requirements of the indigenous community is, politely put, questionable.



## **RECLAIMERS TWENTY-FIRST DEMAND**

### **Self-sufficiency in oil, industry and as a food producer for Australia.**

The idea here is that Australia bow out of globalisation. The idea would be motivated by the exploitative nature of globalisation that we can assume Reclaim rightly recognises. Empirical evidence that the idea can be implemented would rest with the possibility that Australia has the resources to be self-sufficient and does not need foreign trade. Let us grant this independence is physically possible. It would after all depend on how people lived etc, and there is a sense in which for 40, 000 years Australia was already self-sufficient.

Today the use of the industrial means are dictated by the global market. Reclaim is not happy with the results which means they either want to reorganise the way that Australians experience market relations, or exempt Australia from the market altogether. The only way to achieve this, though, is that those currently exploited by the market, and who do not direct the industrial response to market dictates, must gain power. They are the more numerous, being the workers, and also on an individual basis the least empowered. Unity overcomes individual disempowerment and allows people to fight exploitation by finally having a say in how production runs.

How can you have unity against the system if you exclude certain workers and if you blame them rather than that system?

If people are serious about pt 21, or at least about the process of discussing alternative ways of living to the rule-all global market, they should quit Reclaim. In our view they should join a non-bigoted, fully transparent and non-hierarchical organisation in which everyone thinks for themselves about how to unfuck the world.

**RECLAIMERS TWENTY-SECOND DEMAND**  
**Australia's land from 100% foreign ownership.**

Our response to 22 is the same as our response to 21 above. Land is currently part of the productive means, and is currently used and owned as dictated by global economics. The only way to determine its use, including figuring out how we live by the non-exploitative care taker ethic of Aboriginal people, is to unite and fight the exploitation administered by the bosses. The group responsible for getting this land into foreign ownership are the colonisers, the British, and the leaders (bosses, politicians, rich mofos etc) of the colonised land, not Muslims!

**RECLAIMERS TWENTY-THIRD DEMAND**  
**Australia's regional and rural voice.**

The problem with a rural voice is there is no unified rural community to voice it. Rural communities are divided: there are landholder and big companies, there are the Indigenous owners, there are small-time farmers who employ a few people, there are people employed by them and those not employed at all. All groups have different interests and different views. If we want a voice for the disempowered, as Reclaim should want, it will need to be a voice raised against exploitation of people and land, and raised as rallying cry for unity against exploitation. Exploitation is not there because it is fun, but because it is the powerful who can and do exploit. To beat them we must blame their way of running the world, not use small religious minorities as scapegoats for our problems.

## **RECLAIMERS TWENTY-FOURTH DEMAND**

**Respect for our history, culture and ideologies taught in our education system.**

A variety of curricula are currently taught in our education system. For instance, in state schools one would likely get a secular agenda, in private schools more a religious slant. What is seriously lacking, though, is respect for indigenous history, culture and ideologies, with a lot of Australian history taught in schools beginning with WWI. So it is hard to know what pt 24 is really about, but we certainly don't believe for a second that they're calling for indigenous languages, songs and dances to be taught in our education system, and are probably calling for the likes of more patriotic stories of Aussie war heroes, stricter enforcement of singing national anthems and other rubbish.

On a side note, we would have no problem with the ideas of Reclaim Australia being taught to students. Provided, of course that the other side, our arguments and any others against Reclaim were also taught. All things being equal, and in the absence of coercion, we have complete faith in the minds of the young.



## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This zine was written by two local anarchists as an effort to encourage society to think critically about the sometimes persuasive arguments of white dudes waving Aussie flags and yelling about ISIS blowing up your wife's Sunday dress.

We do not support religious organisations, as these are dogmatic, hierarchical structures which limit people's freedom of thought as well as their self-determination generally. However, it is this very belief in freedom of thought which leads us to act in solidarity with the Muslim community.

We also understand that the actions of Reclaim Australia are actually more likely to lead to further extremism and violence than they are to stop this, and hope this zine has demonstrated that violence in our communities can only be solved by attacking the roots of the problem: oppression, poverty, exploitation. Reclaim is based on bigotry rather than clear thinking, it fails to offer an environment in which we can work together to create a better world.

By thinking for ourselves we can make all social interactions better, enjoyable, creative and smart. Currently these interactions are mainly under control of a blind idiotic market.

The solution is to oppose Reclaim and look for ways to create more self-determination for yourself and your communities.

If you're keen to oppose Reclaim's rallies directly, make sure you don't miss the next counter-rallies:

BRISBANE - July 19th, 10am, Emma Miller Place

SYDNEY - July 19th, 10am, Martin Place

MELBOURNE - July 18th, 10am, Parliament House

NEWCASTLE - July 19th, 10am, Customs House, 1 Bond Street

GOLD COAST - July 19th, 10.30am, The Arts Centre, 135 Bundall Rd

Further reading:

[www.reclaimwhat.net](http://www.reclaimwhat.net) (awesome resource specific to this issue!)

<http://www.halal-australia.com.au/clarifying-misconceptions-about-halal/>

[reclaimreasonaus.wordpress.com](http://reclaimreasonaus.wordpress.com)

<http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-fascists-are-the-tools-of-the-state>



