

**The
violence
of
silence
& the Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
First Nations Women**

Silence continues to define the Senate Inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. On Tuesday, the Inquiry held a hearing in Brisbane where it heard from Queensland Police Service and the Director of Public Prosecutions among other lawyers and advocates.

The Inquiry has not published any media releases regarding the Brisbane hearing, nor its plans for future hearings.

In addition to the Inquiry's own silence, no media outlets covered Tuesday's hearing. This continues the pattern of media and government silence surrounding the disappearance and murder of Indigenous women, including from this Inquiry which is designed to amplify victims and their communities.

Refusing to address racial & gendered violence

In questioning the Queensland Police on Tuesday, the Inquiry discussed issues such as cultural training, communication with families and minimum standards, but chose not to substantially grapple with the underlying systemic racial and gendered violence that is the root cause of disappearance and murder of Indigenous women.

The silence surrounding disappeared Indigenous women erases Indigenous experiences of racialised & gendered violence, normalising the disappearance of Indigenous women as unremarkable or even inevitable.

The Inquiry must foreground race and gender to effectively understand relevant issues in its Terms of Reference, to work respectfully with families and seek some form of justice and accountability.

Last year, ICRR, Dr Amy McQuire and Sisters Inside wrote to the Committee responsible for the Inquiry with concerns that the Inquiry's approach overlooked the central role of racial and gendered violence. The Committee responded by stating it was "not appropriate" to prejudge racial and gendered violence as a fundamental cause, despite being tasked with specifically addressing the disappearance and murder of Indigenous women – who are both racialised and gendered.

What does this silence do?

The silence being replicated in this Inquiry is part of the conditions that make it possible for so many Indigenous women to be disappeared & murdered.

Indigenous women are not given the same effort & attention in media & investigations afforded to others. Because of this inaction, perpetrators are rarely held to account for their violence. This enables violence to continue because it sets a pattern where perpetrators know they can enact violence against Indigenous women without consequences.

The Inquiry must understand the function of this silence if it is to be of benefit to communities. It can do this by centring & amplifying the voices of Indigenous women & their testimonies, recognising disappearance and murder as racial and gendered violence and holding agencies like Queensland Police to account.

Indigenous women & their families continue to speak out about systemic silence, violence & injustice, it's time for this Inquiry to do the same.

Read more

via icrr.com.au/resources:

What happened to the Senate Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women? *The Conversation*

Submission to the Inquiry by Dr Amy McQuire, ICRR and Sisters Inside

Expert report into the Inquiry into QPS responses to family and domestic violence

The Act of Disappearing by Dr Amy McQuire *Meanjin*