

# The Sydney Morning Herald

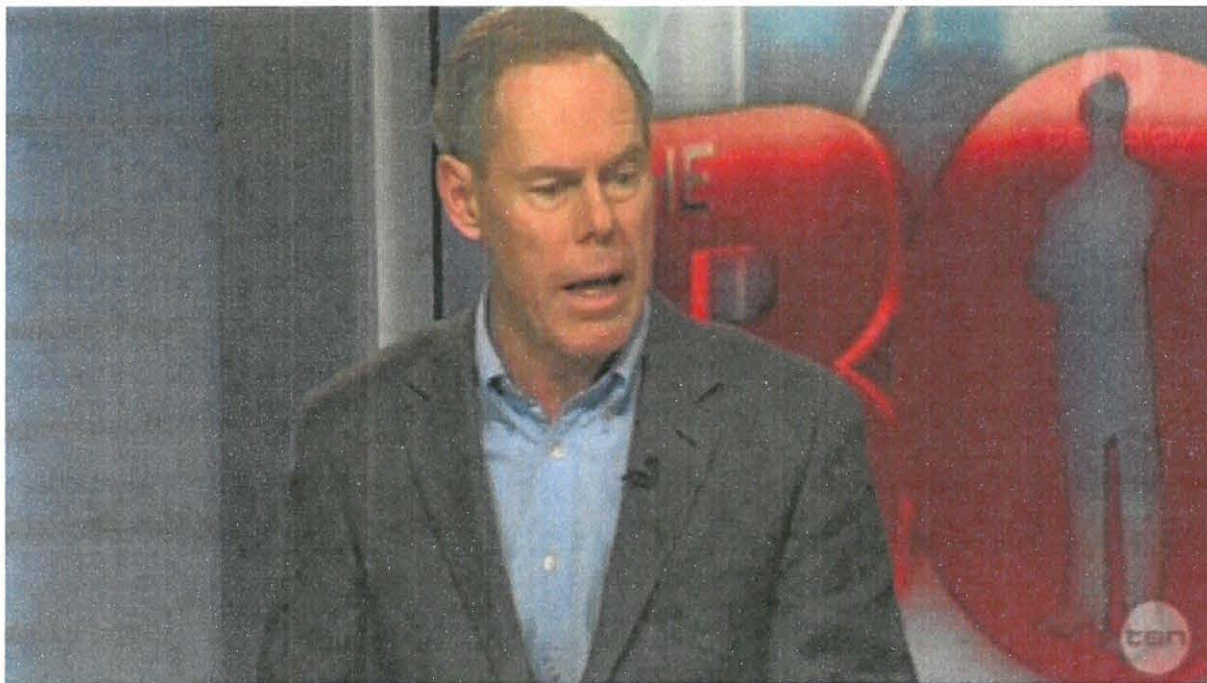
POLITICS FEDERAL

## Aboriginal women on welfare are 'cash cows': former MP Gary Johns

By [Sarah Whyte](#)**Updated** 13 July 2015 – 9:43am, first published 12 July 2015 – 1:08pm

Aboriginal women on welfare are being used as "cash cows" by having children for government payouts, former Queensland Labor MP Gary Johns has said.

The controversial comments were aired on Channel Ten's *Bolt Report* on Sunday, when discussing constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians.



Former Labor MP Gary Johns made the controversial comments on Channel Ten's Bolt Report on Sunday. CHANNEL TEN

Mr Johns also said Cape York Indigenous leader Noel Pearson needed to "start thinking" about the fundamental issues that affected "his people".



"Look, a lot of poor women in this country, a large proportion of whom are Aboriginal, are used as cash cows, right?" Mr Johns said. "They are kept pregnant and producing children for the cash. Now, that has to stop."

The former politician was responding to [statistics](#) by the Aboriginal Housing Victoria that showed Aboriginal women were 34 times more likely to suffer domestic violence than non-indigenous women, and almost 11 times more likely to die at the hands of their partners.

According to a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, which starts in Victoria on Monday, it said Aboriginal women were far less likely to report their abuse to authorities for fear their children will be taken away.

Mr Johns said he would like Cape York community leader Noel Pearson to "start thinking" about the fundamental issues that "affect his people and our people at the really lower end of this society."

It's not the first time Mr Johns has made divisive statements about welfare. In December he made headlines by suggesting people should only be given the dole if they are on compulsory contraception.

When asked whether Mr Pearson should be requesting an Aborigines-only council to advise Parliament, which was floated last week by the Indigenous constitutional recognition talks in Sydney, Mr Johns said Mr Pearson needed to look closer to home.

"Look, Noel has to be honest and tell the Australian electorate there are 16 Aborigines in Australian parliaments who got themselves elected, right?" he said.

"So, Noel, put up, run for the Senate, see if you can get yourself elected as a senator for Queensland."

"We just want to listen to you and what you can do to an electorate or for an electorate. Noel, it's about time you were honest, got away from this little fantasy of you re-writing the Australian constitution and just play politics in the best liberal democracy in the world."

Mr Pearson has been contacted for comment.

Senate F&PA Committee

Tabled Document

Inquiry: Supplementary Estimates

Date / Time: 26/10/13 10:18 AM

Witness Name: Sen. Jenny McAllister

Organisation: .....



**Sarah Whyte**



Sarah Whyte is a political reporter in the Canberra bureau, covering immigration, customs and the High Court. Previously, Sarah was the consumer affairs reporter for The Sydney Morning Herald.