The problem with being an activist, like Adam Goodes is that you are often delivering a message which the people as a whole are not ready to hear. And as with any such message which is spoken into the cauldron of public opinion, it will get attacked, misconstrued, demonised and reduced to simplistic jargon until the public is unable to determine the message from the messenger.

It has happened throughout history. Many have been condemned to silent, anonymous exile and few have risen above the tide of public hysteria to see the shift they aspired to materialise into reality. Mandela, Ali, Aung San Suu Kyi, and many others have been sent to jail while standing for a cause. They were vilified, hated and marginalised by societies who were not ready to hear their messages.

In modern day Australia, we espouse the notion of freedom of speech as a cornerstone of our society. We praise those who have spoken out against injustice and we make heroes of those who fight for a cause… We love to see the local hero win against the odds; or the worker cut the boss down to size. We love a fair go and a fair fight and in some form of homage to our colonial history, we love to see the underdog rise up to beat the establishment… Only this time; we are the establishment and Adam Goodes is the underdog.

It was okay when Goodesy was playing the role the way it was meant to be. The aboriginal kid, made good through sport. An example to all Australians that you could pull yourself up by the bootstraps and make something of yourself no matter what the circumstances. If Adam Goodes can make it to Australian of the Year, it proves we really are the land of opportunity.

But what if he gets there and says the wrong thing? Suddenly freedom of speech becomes freedom to say what you like unless we don’t want to hear it. Then it becomes unpatriotic, ungrateful and dare I say it Un-Australian. For as long as you are kicking goals, winning premierships and Brownlow medals, you are a hero. But the minute you make a stand which goes beyond the realms of your own comfort and reputation and into the realms of the greater good, you are breaking the golden rule of operating in a surface democracy. And this is not just about racism. It is about all the isms. A feminist can speak out so long as she stays ‘feminine’. A sports star can have a voice so long as it does not overshadow their deeds on the field and a media personality can say just about anything except an off camera statement which shows their ‘real’ attitude.

So when Adam Goodes gets up and talks about Invasion Day in a speech to the nation and then celebrates a goal with a tribal dance, he is not just exercising his right to free speech, he is going further and exhibiting his responsibility to exercising free speech no matter what the cost to him personally.

In an ideal world, I assume the last thing Adam Goodes wants is to be booed, harassed and subjected to public abuse. It would be easy for him to be Australian of the Year and ‘play the game’, but instead he has chosen to do what many great activists have done and make a stand which goes beyond the realms of his own comfort and reputation and into the realms of the greater good. The argument here is not really whether booing Adam Goodes is racist or not, but whether those who are doing it are prepared to genuinely explore and understand why they would choose to do so.

Is it because he is aboriginal? If so why don’t the other 71 indigenous players in the league get booed? Is it because he’s a dirty player? Not much logic there either, after all he has been voted the fairest player in the entire competition twice. Is it because he did a war dance after kicking a goal? If so, let’s hope that crowd never go see an All Blacks game! No, Adam Goodes is booed because he makes us all feel uncomfortable about an issue we do not know how to deal with. By vilifying him, we do not have to question ourselves, or ask how a 13 year old girl could reduce such a magnificent athlete to tears with one word. We do not have to ask why a man who has played through injury, discomfort and pain, could not bring himself to take the field last week.

You see by making Adam Goodes the villain we do not have to address the deeper issue. We don’t have to ask why it is so hard for The Australian of The Year to have his voice not just heard but also understood. You don’t have to agree with Goodes. You don’t even have to respect him, but for so long as you sit in the cheap seats safe in the midst the anonymous masses and boo him you only need look in the mirror to understand what the problem is. When you boo Adam Goodes, you boo courage; you boo a person standing for a cause. When you anonymously boo from the crowd and call him a weak whinger, what exactly is you are doing? Aren’t you being weak? Aren’t you whinging? Aren’t you trying to have your anger heard?

We know what Adam Goodes is standing for… But what exactly is your point?
Thailand Trip

The Thailand trip is scheduled for week 9 of Term 3. The focus for the trip is centred around independence and this term’s theme of community. Students will learn to see themselves as part of a wider global community. They will also work with local communities to understand the importance of community in a different country and context.

Please be aware deposits for Thailand camp were due on the 31st of July. Please contact the school if you have any questions in regards to the upcoming trip.

DECY

We have just completed week 5 for VCE’s and week 2 for Year 7-10. If you have any questions in regards to your child’s progress please contact Kate.

kate@ce.edu.au
Birthdays

This month we celebrated Marty’s 17th Birthday with a beautifully decorated train cake...courtesy of the great Shantooise and Merrigan.

Important Dates

Term 3

Sat Sept 5th - Sat 12th Sept
Friday 11th September
Tuesday 6th October

South East Asia Trip (TBC)
Term 3 Concludes
Term 4 Commences
JCS's latest security!