

Héritier Lumumba ends all contact with Collingwood over response to racism allegations

- *'Nothing has changed' since Do Better report, says former player*
- *Magpies CEO defends club's commitment and processes*



Héritier Lumumba alleged he was subject to racist nicknames over his decade at Collingwood.

Emma Kemp
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Héritier Lumumba says he and two fellow former Collingwood players have severed ties with the AFL club because “nothing has changed” in the 15 months since a damning report commissioned by the club found a culture of “systemic racism” within its walls.

The premiership player, whose allegations of racism during his time at the club from 2004 to 2015 sparked the independent investigation which resulted in last February’s Do Better report, announced he, Leon Davis and Andrew Krakouer would no longer engage with the Magpies as they attempt to implement the report’s recommendations.

Davis and Krakouer have also previously alleged they experienced racist incidents at the club.

“After 15 months of dialogue to address past incidents of racism at the Collingwood Football Club, Leon Davis, Andrew Krakouer and I have formally notified the club

that we are officially terminating all communications with CFC,” Lumumba tweeted on Wednesday.

“Nothing has changed. It is our firm belief that the Collingwood Football Club has no intention of acting in good faith to achieve a just outcome for past players who have experienced racism at the club.”

Neither Davis or Krakouer have commented publicly.

In a statement on Wednesday afternoon, Collingwood chief executive Mark Anderson defended the club’s processes and said “we remain committed to, and hopeful of, a genuine outcome for any and all players who have been subject to racism at our club”.

“Our processes of the past needed to be reviewed and the Do Better review and report recommendations addressed what we needed to change and implement,” Anderson said.

“The Do Better report recommended that a truth-telling process and strategy was established to address and reconcile past acts of racism to inform ongoing change so that racism doesn’t occur in the future.

“Overseen by the expert advisory group, the club has sought input from experts in truth telling to establish a process where experiences of racism at the club can be shared in a supported, respectful and safe environment and for the club to acknowledge and learn from the harm that has been caused.

“As part of our Do Better report implementation, the truth-telling process was always planned to commence at the end of April and communication to our past players, coaches and staff will occur within this time frame. We want to ensure that all Collingwood football club people who have been impacted by racism are able to be part of this process.

“The club is committed to ensuring any and all players who have experienced racism benefit from this process and look forward to and welcome their involvement.”

Lumumba’s social media post comes two weeks after the authors of the Do Report said the Magpies had made “significant and genuine progress” in addressing issues with historical racism.

In their 12-month review of the club, Professor Larissa Behrendt and Professor Lindon Coombes also reported that “full implementation has not been reached”.

“It is clear by the work that has been done by the club ... that there is a commitment within Collingwood to ensure that Do Better isn’t gathering dust on a shelf,” they wrote. “There is movement towards a more inclusive culture and an anti-racist framework for Collingwood, though it is important to acknowledge that real cultural and structural change requires continued focus, resourcing and integration.”

The club moved quickly to demonstrate a commitment to progress last February after a hugely damaging week during which former president Eddie McGuire said the release of Do Better's findings marked a "proud" day for the club.

Days later, having conceded he "got it wrong" and did not mean to suggest that the club was proud of past incidents of racism, he stood down but reiterated his view that the Magpies were not a racist club.

At the time Lumumba said the report vindicated his concerns but that the club's response to it was "shameful".