

# **The war against Indigenous Australia/ns: Foucault, racism and social work education**

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## **Abstract**

In a series of lectures at the College de France 1975–1976 entitled ‘Society must be defended’, Michel Foucault made the following observation: ‘sovereignty’s old right – to take life or let live ... came to be complemented by ... the power to “make” live and “let” die’ (2003, p. 241). Foucault connected this disposition with socio-political events and concluded that modern societies, though describing their machinations as being in a state of peace, are internally at war with subjects/bodies produced as belonging to an ‘inferior species’ (Foucault 2003). This paper connects Foucault’s understanding of ‘racism’ with the concept of ‘fields of visibility’ to explore the creation of culturally competent practices among social work students when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## **Biography**

Tony Fletcher is a PhD candidate in the School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy at the University of South Australia. His research interests include gendered violence, masculinities, whiteness and finding ways to make connections with post-structural scholarship that support the foregrounding of potential and the loosening of grids of possibility in social work practice.