

Affirmative confusion

It is not I, but Robert Segall ("A modest price", April 13) who is confused. Dr Segall says that affirmative action rectifies historical injustice even if it benefits those who are not disadvantaged. This, he says, is because the African community "deserves to see justice".

On the need for justice, Dr Segall and I agree.

What he fails to understand, however, is that communal justice is attained only as an aggregation of justice for individuals.

We punish the criminal and make restitution to the victim. We do not "punish" and "compensate" members of the criminal's and victim's communities.

The way to rectify injustice is not via racial profiling, but instead by compensating those individuals who have been unfairly disadvantaged.

Dr Segall believes that the costs of appointing less qualified candidates are modest. He fails to realise that where significantly less qualified candidates are appointed as university lecturers, the costs are paid by students of all "races".

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