



Australian  
Human  
Rights  
Commission

# National Anti-Racism Strategy

CONSULTATION REPORT • JULY 2012



# Contents

## 1 ● 1 Introduction

### 2 ● 2 Background

#### 2 • 2.1 The consultation process

## 4 ● 3 Findings

### 4 • 3.1 Survey responses

### 5 • 3.2 Submissions

### 5 • 3.3 Issues outside of the scope of consultation

## 6 ● 4 Priority areas and strategies

### 6 • 4.1 Schools and higher education

### 8 • 4.2 Media

### 9 • 4.3 Workplaces

### 10 • 4.4 Government – employment and service delivery

### 11 • 4.5 Online

### 11 • 4.6 Sport

### 12 • 4.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### 13 • 4.8 Young people

### 14 • 4.9 Housing

### 15 • 4.10 Health

### 15 • 4.11 Police and justice system

### 16 • 4.12 Law reform

### 16 • 4.13 Government – leadership and whole-of-government approaches

### 17 • 4.14 Community-building

### 18 • 4.15 Addressing systemic racism

### 20 • 4.16 Strategies to help individuals address racism

### 20 • 4.17 Developing an anti-racism campaign

## 23 ● 5 Where to from here

## 24 ● Appendices

### 25 • Appendix A: National Anti-Racism Strategy online survey

### 28 • Appendix B: Consultation dates and locations

### 29 • Appendix C: List of submissions received

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## A note on referencing in this report

Unless otherwise noted, all quotes in the report are from anonymous online surveys or submissions made through the online submission template and received by the Australian Human Rights Commission between 29 March and 11 May 2012. All formal submissions cited in the report are available at:

[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

# 1 Introduction

In February 2011, the Australian Government announced Australia's new multicultural policy – The People of Australia – which reaffirms the importance of a culturally diverse and socially cohesive nation.<sup>1</sup>

A key component of the policy was the establishment of a Partnership to develop and implement a comprehensive National Anti-Racism Strategy for Australia. This Strategy will address racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in addition to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Partnership is led by the Race Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission. Other members include:

- the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- the Attorney-General's Department
- the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- the Australian Multicultural Council
- the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
- the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Immigration and Citizenship, *The People of Australia: Australia's multicultural policy*, <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-multicultural-australia/multicultural-policy/> (viewed 11 June 2012).

# 2 Background

In March 2012, the Australian Human Rights Commission launched a wide-ranging consultation process to stimulate community debate, discussion and input to guide the development of the National Anti-Racism Strategy.

The consultation period ran from 29 March to 11 May 2012. A discussion paper was launched on 29 March to inform and engage the community and other key stakeholders.<sup>2</sup> A summary of the discussion paper was translated into 26 community languages and made available on the National Anti-Racism Strategy website.

The consultation process was advertised:

- by media release on the day of the launch
- on the Commission's website
- in eleven major national daily newspapers on 31 March 2012
- in the National Indigenous Times and Koori Mail on 4 April
- through radio advertising targeting Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Community members were invited to participate in the consultation process by:

- attending a public meeting
- making a formal submission to the discussion paper
- making an online submission via the website template, and/or
- completing an online survey.

The online survey is at Appendix A.

## 2.1 The consultation process

A total of 23 public meetings were held in 17 locations across every state and territory, including five consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A number of the consultations were facilitated by state and territory equal opportunity commissions. Around 680 people participated in the consultations.

The list of consultation dates and locations is at Appendix B.

The Commission received 1584 online surveys and 80 submissions made using the online submission template. The online surveys were anonymous and the online submissions could be made anonymously.

In addition, 123 formal submissions were received; 82 were made by organisations and 41 by individuals. The list of submissions received is at appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> National Anti-Racism Strategy discussion paper, [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/antiracism/discussion\\_paper.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/antiracism/discussion_paper.html) (viewed 18 June 2012).

# How does racism make you feel?

*It creates a divide. Australia is one country but it doesn't feel like it*

*It makes me feel like a second class citizen in Australia, even though I have been living here for 14 years.*

*It makes me feel less connected to Australia and the Australian community to the point where I find it difficult to identify as Australian.*

*It makes me feel like I have made the wrong decision to enter this country.*

*Intimidated, unequal as an Australian, unable to give my best to my adopted country Australia which I now call home.*

*I have experienced racism all my life in Australia and my response is different according to each circumstance ... generally speaking, I feel as though I take less direct action and have accepted the experience as part and parcel of living in Australia.*

*It makes me feel awful. I feel so much revulsion that I sometimes feel physically ill. It is a major contributor to the anxiety I experience in everyday life.*

*I experience racism on an all too regular basis ... It is a tremendous psychological blow because it is something that I experienced from age 5 to now and I am often left feeling helpless and vulnerable for days afterwards.*

*Encounters in which I feel racism directed towards me eventually make me question myself and why things have to be this way ... I wondered one day what it would be like to be white and how much better my life would probably be. That was a low point.*

*Racism primarily makes me feel scared. I have been the victim of five racially motivated physical assaults and one sexual assault, which has severely curtailed my ability to participate in public life ....*

*It makes me feel like I am a lesser human being.*

*I feel insecure and that I'm not welcome and accepted by the country.*

*I'm a dark skinned African; racism is not something I experience once or twice in my life. Do I speak up or take action every day – of course not! I'd be exhausted, I'd be fighting every day ....*

*Upset for the target, angry towards the perpetrator, embarrassed that I do not know how to stop it.*

*It makes me feel like I am lower than everyone else, an intruder who is not part of this society.*

*I'm a proud Australian but it does make me cringe. We can do better.*

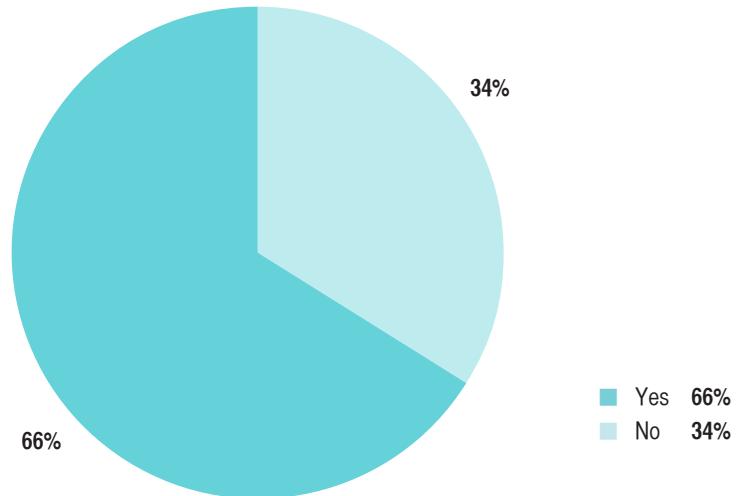
# 3 Findings

## 3.1 Survey responses

Two thirds of survey respondents identified having experienced racism.

**Figure 1:**

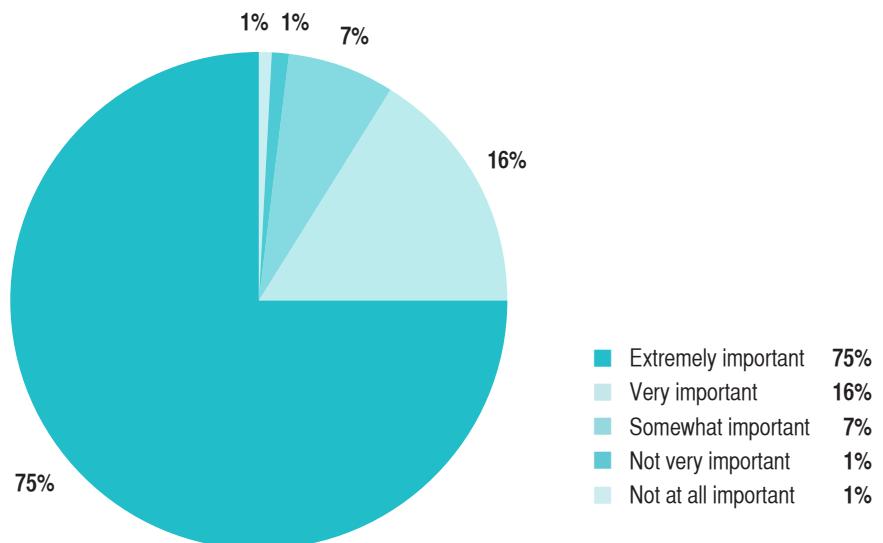
Have you ever experienced racism?



Nine out of ten respondents said that racism was either an extremely important or a very important issue facing individuals and Australia as a whole.

**Figure 2:**

How important an issue is racism in Australia?



Survey respondents identified the five key priority areas for addressing racism as:

1. schools and higher education
2. the media
3. government service providers
4. workplaces
5. the internet.

### 3.2 Submissions

Around 80% of formal submissions supported the need for a National Anti-Racism Strategy.

All of the submissions that did not support the need for a Strategy were made by individuals. Some of the recurring themes in these submissions were that multiculturalism has been ineffective; that racism is the result of multiculturalism and migrants should assimilate; and that the incidence of racism in Australia is exaggerated by the media and by government, therefore measures to prevent and reduce racism are not necessary.

This latter theme is exemplified in the following online survey response to the question ‘How does racism affect the community?’

*Nowhere near as much as the media make out. Sure there were some riots at Cronulla. Sure some Aboriginals were killed or even as some say, slaughtered, when whites with a different culture arrived in Australia. However, now we have the opportunity to get along with each other in freedom.*

### 3.3 Issues outside of the scope of consultation

Although the consultation process did not seek to cover issues relating to religion, some participants raised concerns about Muslim immigrants, ‘Islamification’ of Australia and the perceived erosion of Christian cultural traditions, often expressed as concerns about potential restrictions on the celebration of Christmas and Easter in schools. These participants generally also said that discrimination against religious groups should clearly remain outside the scope of a National Anti-Racism Strategy.

In contrast, a number of consultation participants strongly recommended that the Strategy pursue the prohibition of religious discrimination under Federal law.

# 4 Priority areas and strategies

The following analysis draws on information provided during the public meetings and through the formal and online submissions and online survey. The information is grouped according to the six themes identified by the Commission as possible priority areas to guide the consultation process. Other themes highlighted as priority areas during the consultations are also discussed.

Across all forms of the consultation, three areas emerged as the highest priorities for the National Anti-Racism Strategy to focus its activities: education, media and employment.

## 4.1 Schools and higher education

*When my daughter went to school here she was constantly called a curry muncher and the school did nothing about it. Now I'm in 2012 and my friends' children experience the same kind of remarks. We need to ask, what are we going to do about it?<sup>3</sup>*

### (a) Key themes

The importance of working with primary and high schools was a recurring theme that came through the submissions, surveys and public meetings. Schools were identified as both settings in which racism occurs and as sites to reach children and young people. There was very strong support for engaging children and young people in anti-racism initiatives. However, these should go beyond 'culture days' and explicitly focus on students' attitudes.

Teachers were also identified as a key target group for anti-racism initiatives.

*I recently became a volunteer at [a state] primary school... it was considered a 'low class' suburb 'with lots of Aborigines' ... I was very surprised to see that the student body comprised many nationalities ... I have watched with interest as the children interact with each other in and out of the classroom. When one teacher calls the roll, she uses their own languages to say 'Good morning.'<sup>4</sup>*

It was suggested that teachers – early childhood educators, as well as primary and high school teachers – be given resources and support to assist them in challenging racism and prejudice expressed by students.

*I believe that cultural awareness should be embedded in early childhood programs and the government should provide inexpensive resources to centres so they can ensure this. In my experience many early childhood educators and school teachers are not confident when it comes to addressing racism and need training.<sup>5</sup>*

There were also examples given of teachers holding racist views, and concerns raised about teachers communicating these views to students.

Participants in the Darwin public meeting discussed the importance of involving school educators in the development of school-focused anti-racism strategies. However, it was also noted that anti-racism initiatives in schools were of limited effect when students go home and 'hear racism' from their families.

<sup>3</sup> Participant, Darwin public meeting (19 April 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Anonymous response, online survey.

<sup>5</sup> Country Kids Play and Learning, online submission.

Firstly, I thought Australia is a very kindly and friendly country. But the racism will make me to persuade all my friends not to come to Australia for travelling and studying.

The treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was also raised in several consultations. Participants in the Kalgoorlie focus group said that having segregated classes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students creates a ‘racist mindset’. In one example, a school did not allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to walk around in groups of more than three.

The experiences of international tertiary students were discussed at the Adelaide public meeting, where it was noted that Chinese students feel there is an ‘anti-Asian environment’.

*Firstly, I thought Australia is a very kindly and friendly country. But the racism will make me to persuade all my friends not to come to Australia for travelling and studying.<sup>6</sup>*

The need for greater support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at university was also raised, with participants in the Mount Gambier focus group saying there is more support for these students within the TAFE system.

**(b) Proposed strategies**

- The Executive Council of Australian Jewry recommended a fully-funded process to engage school educators in a review of the effectiveness of school curricula in addressing racism and prejudice.<sup>7</sup>
- Strengthening the national curriculum in areas where it was felt progress could be made to build awareness and reduce racism, including through:
  - Language and culture, to enhance cultural competence among students, particularly in relation to Aboriginal culture. *My 5 year old son is in Grade 1 and has not been taught anything about Aboriginal people’s culture in school. I am appalled and disappointed.<sup>8</sup>*
  - History, to increase knowledge of the past treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the White Australia policy, as well as the consequences of these policies. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria recommended a school-based program, ‘Lessons from our Past’, focusing on the negative impacts of previous policies and the potential of multiculturalism.<sup>9</sup>
- Supporting schools to establish anti-racism policies, with transparent complainthandling processes and reporting on outcomes.
- Developing and distributing classroom resources, such as educational DVDs on racism.

<sup>6</sup> Anonymous response, online survey.

<sup>7</sup> Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Submission 41.

<sup>8</sup> Anonymous response, online survey.

<sup>9</sup> Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Submission 88.

<sup>10</sup> Eastern Health, online submission.

The diversity on our streets is missing on our screens. It is a real shame.

**(c) Recommended good practice examples**

- VicHealth Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity pilot program.<sup>11</sup>
- The work of the Foundation for Young Australians.<sup>12</sup>
- NSW Department of Education and Training Anti-Racism Contact Officers.<sup>13</sup>

## 4.2 Media

*The diversity on our streets is missing on our screens. It is a real shame.<sup>14</sup>*

**(a) Key themes**

The media was consistently raised as a priority area where racism and prejudice should be addressed. For example, All Together Now said in its submission that the National Anti-Racism Strategy should focus on those sectors that have the most influence on shaping public opinion, such as the media.<sup>15</sup> In its submission, SBS cited the findings of the 2006 ‘Reporting Diversity’ study that most representations of cultural difference in Australian media reinforce stereotypes of the ‘bad, sad, mad or (the) other’.<sup>16</sup>

Two key themes emerged in relation to the media:

- the need for greater representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to provide a more accurate representation of Australia, and
- the problematic way some sections of the media report issues relating to CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Some participants felt that media commentators should differentiate between factual reporting and opinion, while others believed that the way in which controversial issues have been reported has at times incited violence.

At the Parramatta public meeting, there was discussion about the media coverage of the proposal to build an Islamic school in Camden. It was felt that the reporting by certain mainstream media outlets was highly selective, focusing on a few people who strongly opposed the issue rather than reflecting the wider community sentiment. One participant felt that such reporting reflected a ‘subliminal White Australia policy’ in the media.

It was also suggested that media reporting involving CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples frequently tends to focus on a small number of negative examples, often in relation to alleged criminal activity. This contributes to, and reinforces, stereotypes about these communities. As one Lebanese participant in the Darwin public meeting said:

*Whenever we go to apply for a job or services people consider that we are angry people ... The media play a big role. I was watching commentary about Lebanese community in Sydney – by the end I was ready to hate Lebanese people!*

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11 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, *Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity*, <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/LEAD> (viewed 11 June 2012).

12 Foundation for Young Australians, [www.fya.org.au](http://www.fya.org.au) (viewed 18 June 2012).

13 Department of Education and Training, *Anti-Racism Contact Officers*, [http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/anti\\_racism.php](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/anti_racism.php) (viewed 11 June 2012).

14 Diversity in Australian Media, online submission.

15 All Together Now, Submission 47.

16 Reporting Diversity, <http://www.reportingdiversity.org.au/> (viewed 17 June 2012), cited in SBS, Submission 79.

The thing with discrimination is that if you go to a shop there are lots of apples – you can choose any one you like. It is the same with employers – they choose whichever apple they like the look of.

**(b) Proposed strategies**

*(We should see) examples of ‘ordinary’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD people who have achieved success ... At North Yarra Community Health we have seen many refugees of Afghani, Iranian and Iraqi descent achieve success through higher education, job placement and community leadership and would like to see more positive promotion in mainstream media.<sup>17</sup>*

- A review of media regulation regarding the reporting of immigration and multiculturalism and the representation of CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Cultural competency training for representatives of media outlets; for example, the Refugee Council of Australia recommended the development of an accredited national training package to improve the standard of media reporting in Australia.<sup>18</sup>
- Better industry-led monitoring and regulation of ‘comments’ sections on the websites of media outlets so that the onus is not on members of affected communities to complain about discriminatory content.
- Greater publicity of successful anti-discrimination and anti-vilification cases involving media commentators to send the message that ‘no-one is above the law’.

**(c) Recommended good practice examples**

- The ACT Human Rights Commission noted that action items in the lapsed ACT Anti-Racism Strategy included investigation of cultural awareness programs and development of a code of conduct for media outlets.<sup>19</sup>
- The Media Reconciliation Industry Network Group – a group of media related organisations that work to implement practical measures in support of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.<sup>20</sup>

**4.3 Workplaces**

*[We should] celebrate businesses and organisations that go beyond paying lip service to multiculturalism, like those who do business in multiple languages, or have high variance in cultural makeup.<sup>21</sup>*

**(a) Key themes**

Employment was identified as another priority area where racism can and should be addressed. The barriers to employment faced by people of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds were raised frequently during the consultations. A number of examples were given where applicants with ‘foreign-sounding’ names were not shortlisted for job interviews, as well as instances where applicants had changed the name on their applications to a more ‘Anglo’ sounding name and received interviews.

*The thing with discrimination is that if you go to a shop there are lots of apples – you can choose any one you like. It is the same with employers – they choose whichever apple they like the look of.<sup>22</sup>*

17 North Yarra Community Health, online submission.

18 Refugee Council of Australia, Submission 77.

19 ACT Human Rights Commission, Submission 108.

20 Media Reconciliation Industry Network Group, Submission 84.

21 Anonymous response, online survey.

22 Participant, Broadmeadows public meeting (30 March 2012).

The need to address the lack of employer recognition of overseas qualifications was raised on a number of occasions, as was the importance of assisting employers to overcome their concerns about employing people from different cultures, with potentially different traditions and values.

Other issues canvassed included the need for more people of CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds to hold leadership positions in organisations; that migrants are disproportionately affected by the high rate of casual employment in certain sectors; and that government should ‘lead by example’ in employing more people of CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Discussion at some public meetings focused on the particularly difficult situation that Aboriginal people in certain locations face when seeking employment. At the Dubbo public meeting, participants said that employers in the town were very reluctant to recruit Aboriginal people because of negative community stereotypes, while an example was given in the Mount Gambier public meeting of an Aboriginal man who pretended to be Indian in order to get a job.

Discussions at the Mount Gambier meeting also noted that employer behaviour was shaped to a certain extent by customer attitudes. It was suggested that Aboriginal people were losing jobs because customers refused to deal with Aboriginal people. Employers felt they had no option but to terminate Aboriginal peoples’ employment because their businesses were at risk. It was also noted that sometimes businesses had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment quotas in place but that quotas did not guarantee that they would be employed in the jobs for which they were skilled. In some examples, Aboriginal people were employed as cleaners in order to meet employment quotas.

**(b) Proposed strategies**

- Encouraging employers to take affirmative action, such as setting targets and quotas, for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from CALD backgrounds.
- Providing support to employers to manage a diverse workforce.
- Showcasing the benefits of a culturally diverse workplace; for example, the benefits of having staff who can speak another language in assisting an organisation to communicate with people from different communities.
- Reviewing workplace policies and training to safeguard vulnerable workers.
- Building links with business and developing programs to support the transition of students from tertiary education into employment and from schools into apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Developing social enterprises with employment and economic outcomes.
- The Metro Migrant Resource Centre recommended that organisations receiving government funding to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or CALD communities should be required to meet benchmarks that demonstrate their commitment to training and employing people from these backgrounds.<sup>23</sup>

**(c) Recommended good practice examples**

- Reconciliation Australia’s Reconciliation Action Plan model.<sup>24</sup>
- VicHealth’s Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity pilot program.<sup>25</sup>
- The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council noted that it is working with government to promote a better understanding among employers of what refugees can offer the labour market.<sup>26</sup>

**4.4 Government – employment and service delivery**

**(a) Key themes**

Government departments were identified as another key priority area for the National Anti-Racism Strategy, both in their role as employers and as service providers to people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds.

A strong view was expressed that the public sector has a higher duty to foster employment diversity and that the employment profile of the public sector should mirror the diversity of the population.

Another key theme to emerge was the need for cultural competency training for government agencies and funded service providers and, where appropriate, training to promote culturally inclusive recruitment and management practices.

It was recommended that government agencies develop Reconciliation Action Plans and, beyond this, to implement measures to ensure the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

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23 Metro Migrant Resource Centre, Submission 59.

24 Reconciliation Australia, Submission 85.

25 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, note 7.

26 Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, Submission 116.

Participants at the Port Augusta public meeting recommended the development of a toolkit for service providers to ensure that services are accessible to Aboriginal people. They also discussed the need for cultural safety guidance for Aboriginal people when approaching government authorities, such as public housing providers and the police, acknowledging that contact with these agencies can make Aboriginal people feel ‘defeated and inferior’.

In its submission, the ACT Torres Strait Islander Corporation recommended compulsory cultural awareness training for all government employees working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.<sup>27</sup>

The important role of settlement services for new arrivals was also highlighted during the consultations, both in providing vital services and in ‘showing people they are welcome’.

#### (b) Recommended good practice examples

- The WA Equal Opportunity Commission’s Needs and Impact Assessments to promote substantive equality in service delivery.<sup>28</sup>
- The Tasmanian Government’s Better Access to Government Services Interagency Working Group.<sup>29</sup>
- The ACT Government’s ‘Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework’.<sup>30</sup>
- The Queensland Government’s Local Area Multicultural Partnerships Program.<sup>31</sup>

### 4.5 Online

During the consultations, participants raised concerns that young people face an increased risk of cyber-racism due to the amount of time they spend online and that Australia needs to address the influence of neo-Nazi groups overseas disseminating material in Australia via the internet.

Broadly, there was a view that Australia needs to address the gaps in the current legislative framework to better regulate cyber-racism. In their submissions, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry provided comprehensive analyses of these gaps and recommendations to address them.<sup>32</sup>

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry also recommended that the measures proposed by the Australian Government in relation to compulsory internet filtering should apply to offshore internet service providers disseminating material which promotes racial hatred, and that the National Anti-Racism Strategy should include a process to assess whether Australia should become a party to the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime concerning the criminalisation of racist and homophobic acts.

The Challenging Racism project recommended that internet service providers be mandated to report on their complaint-handling procedures.<sup>33</sup>

### 4.6 Sport

#### (a) Key themes

The importance of addressing racism in sport, particularly at the community level, was a theme raised regularly throughout the consultation process. There was a common view shared that being part of a team can be the ‘glue that holds us together’.

Sport was generally seen as providing a number of good examples that other sectors could adopt to address racism. However, given the leadership role of sportspeople in the community, participants noted that, when they do something wrong and ‘they just get to say sorry and it’s ok’, this can send a negative message to young people.

#### (b) Proposed strategies

- The AFL was frequently mentioned as demonstrating good practice in addressing racism. A number of stakeholders recommended that similar strategies be extended to other sports. For example, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association noted that the AFL Indigenous Round and ‘Dreamtime at the ‘G’ are good examples of celebrating and promoting the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to a wide audience.<sup>34</sup>

27 ACT Torres Strait Islander Corporation, Submission 104.

28 Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia, *Needs and Impact Assessments*, [http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/Substantiveequality/Substantive\\_equality\\_in\\_practice/NIAS.aspx](http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/Substantiveequality/Substantive_equality_in_practice/NIAS.aspx) (viewed 11 June 2012).

29 Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Tasmania, Submission 75.

30 ACT Government, *Respect, Equity and Diversity framework*, <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/governance/public/RED> (viewed 11 June 2012).

31 Local Government Association of Queensland, *Local Area Multicultural Partnership*, <http://lgaq.asn.au/local-area-multicultural-partnership> (viewed 18 June 2012).

32 Victorian Multicultural Commission, Submission 90; Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Submission 41.

33 Challenging Racism, Submission 82.

34 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association, Submission 91.

Just being born Indigenous makes you feel second class.

- In its submission, Netball Australia discussed the measures it has taken to counter racism within its sport, including the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan and a Racial and Religious Vilification framework. Its recommendations included providing leadership through the National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework 2011; education programs targeting rural, regional and remote areas; a cultural awareness and engagement toolkit to help sports engage different communities; and a website or blog for sporting organisations to share information on best practice.<sup>35</sup>

**(c) Recommended good practice examples**

- Brisbane Roar Against Racism.<sup>36</sup>
- Human Rights are Aussie Rules project.<sup>37</sup>

## 4.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Just being born Indigenous makes you feel second class.<sup>38</sup>

**(a) Key themes**

A major theme to emerge from a number of public meetings and submissions was the need for the National Anti-Racism Strategy to give particular recognition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The following measures were frequently recommended:

- a treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- support for Constitutional recognition
- incorporation of the principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Strategy, with particular consideration of the right to self-determination.

A number of submissions and meeting participants questioned the Australian Government's commitment to a National Anti-Racism Strategy given its suspension of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* to implement the Northern Territory Emergency Response and its continued policy of income management applying to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

Participants in the Darwin public meeting raised concerns about aspects of the Northern Territory Emergency Response, such as alcohol restrictions and the Basics Card:

*When I went to university in Bathurst I could have a glass of wine but now I can't have a glass of wine in Batchelor – I feel like I've gone back 50 years to living on a reservation.*

*Everything that makes people appear different contributes to stereotypes (such as) having to use a Basics Card.*

*I'm approaching pension age and half my income will be put on a Basics Card but (this) won't happen to white people.*

35 Netball Australia, Submission 54.

36 Suncorp Stadium, *Queensland Roars Against Racism*, <http://www.suncorpstadium.com.au/News/Everton%20to%20roar%20against%20racism%20at%20stadium.aspx> (viewed 11 June 2012).

37 Human Rights are Aussie Rules, <http://humanrightsareaussierules.org.au/> (viewed 11 June 2012).

38 Anonymous response, online survey.

## We need to tell Koori kids they're clever.

The need to acknowledge intergenerational issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when considering how to address racism was often noted, as well as the pervasiveness of the racism they can experience. Participants in public meetings in Mt Gambier and Port Augusta described the frequency with which Aboriginal people experience discrimination in their daily lives, such as in shops or being banned from taxis and hotels, with one participant stating that Aboriginal people are ‘treated like dogs, like the lowest race in Australia’.

In its submission, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency identified racism as a ‘disease that makes us all sick’ and recommended the need for ‘treatment ... which is about how Aboriginal communities and the broader society treat each other with respect and through an understanding of human rights’.<sup>39</sup>

### (b) Proposed strategies

- The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples made a number of recommendations in its submission, including in the areas of arts and culture, employment, leadership and the media.<sup>40</sup>
- The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association recommended its Cultural Safety Framework as a model.<sup>41</sup>
- The Northern Territory Law Society recommended increasing funding for the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission to provide training and outreach services, establishment of a remote tenancy advice service and an inquiry into discriminatory legislation in the Northern Territory, particularly laws that contribute to the incarceration of Aboriginal people.<sup>42</sup>

## 4.8 Young people

### (a) Key themes

There was strong support expressed during the consultations about the need to engage children and young people in anti-racism strategies through school and other forums. It was also acknowledged that young people can experience racism in multiple settings; for example, participants in the Brisbane public meeting highlighted areas including school, work and contact with the youth justice system.

A number of participants highlighted noted the need to build the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD young people to deal with conflict broadly, as well as racism specifically. As a participant in the Shepparton public meeting said,

*‘We need to tell Koori kids they’re clever’.*

Young people who took part in the Townsville consultation discussed the need for a safe space – either a physical or online space – for young people to talk across ‘race lines’, as well as support to express different views about people of other races to those of their parents and families.

39 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association, Submission 91.

40 National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, Submission 122.

41 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association, above.

42 Northern Territory Law Society, Submission 113.

**(b) Proposed strategies**

- The Australian Youth Advocacy Coalition and Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network recommended that anti-racism initiatives be ‘co-designed’ with young people, from planning and development through to implementation and evaluation.<sup>43</sup>
- The Australian Psychological Society recommended that peer-to-peer education processes were effective, where young people are trained to act as facilitators or co-facilitators in workshops.<sup>44</sup>

**(c) Recommended good practice examples**

- Victorian Arabic Social Services ‘Anti-Racism Action Band’.<sup>45</sup>
- ‘The Line’ respectful relationships online initiative.<sup>46</sup>
- ‘Project Rockit’ cyber-bullying and leadership online initiative.<sup>47</sup>

## 4.9 Housing

**(a) Key themes**

Racial discrimination in the private rental housing sector was frequently raised as a significant issue and a common experience for both CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There was a widespread feeling that real estate agents stereotype people from certain racial backgrounds and that this creates barriers to their gaining rental housing.

The Adelaide Migrant Health Service noted that refugee families regularly experienced discrimination because of their colour, family size and limited English.<sup>48</sup> Systemic discrimination experienced by Aboriginal people was also raised in Swan Hill, Kalgoorlie and Port Augusta, with participants in the Port Augusta public meeting noting that there are still ‘white streets’ where Aboriginal people know they won’t be able to rent a house.

A specific policy cited in the Kalgoorlie public meeting as potentially discriminatory was the ‘three strikes’ policy, or ‘Disruptive behaviour management policy’, applying to public housing tenants. Under the policy tenants may be evicted if they receive ‘three strikes’ in 12 months for substantiated complaints of ‘minor disruptive behaviour’, defined as ‘acts of nuisance and noise related incidents. Activities that could reasonably be expected to occur on occasion in an ordinary suburban household, but which cause a nuisance to neighbours’.<sup>49</sup>

**(b) Proposed strategies**

- The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria recommended that the National Anti-Racism Strategy consider the recommendations made by the Footscray Community Legal Centre in its ‘Making It Home’ report.<sup>50</sup>
- The Townsville Multicultural Support Group made a number of recommendations to address systemic barriers to rental housing including reducing the number of identification points required by permanent residents who have been in Australia for less than 12 months; addressing the practice of agents not accepting rental applications from Department of Communities’ bond loan recipients; and that the Real Estate Institute of Queensland implement a policy requiring real estate agents to use interpreters when requested.<sup>51</sup>
- Shelter South Australia recommended the establishment of national guidelines and an accreditation process for real estate agents and landlords in relation to compliance with equal opportunity obligations.<sup>52</sup>
- The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland recommended that governments provide more support for community and social housing providers to house people from migrant communities, such as head-leasing programs and tailoring the National Rental Assistance Scheme to migrant families.<sup>53</sup>

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43 Australian Youth Advocacy Coalition and Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network, Submission 100.

44 Australian Psychological Society, Submission 109.

45 Victorian Arabic Social Services, *Anti-Racism Action Band*, <http://arab-vass.com/> (viewed 11 June 2012).

46 Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, *The Line*, <http://www.theline.gov.au> (viewed 11 June 2012).

47 Project Rockit, <http://www.projectrockit.com.au/> (viewed 11 June 2012).

48 Adelaide Migrant Health Service, Submission 55.

49 Government of Western Australia, *Department of Housing Rental Policy Manual* (2012), p 83-84.

50 Footscray Community Legal Centre, *Making It Home – Refugee Housing in Melbourne’s West* (2012). At: <http://www.footscrayclc.org.au/brochures-publications/> (viewed 18 June 2012). Cited in Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Submission 88.

51 Townsville Multicultural Support Group, Submission 67.

52 Shelter South Australia, Submission 76.

53 Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland, Submission 105.

## 4.10 Health

Concerns about access to health services and appropriate service provision were raised in a number of public meetings and submissions. The lack of access to interpreters in hospitals was frequently highlighted, while the need for greater cultural awareness by mainstream health services was discussed in relation to improving service responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### (a) Proposed strategies

- The Australian Psychological Society recommended that the National Anti-Racism Strategy identify and address ways in which both the health and mental health systems discriminate against people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD backgrounds.<sup>54</sup>
- The Australian Indigenous Psychological Society recommended improving access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the Better Access program and provision of resources for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to provide social and emotional wellbeing programs.<sup>55</sup>
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health recommended communicating antiracism information to primary health care providers; strengthening medical school curricula to address racism and cultural competence; and inquiring into institutionalised racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the health system.<sup>56</sup>

### (b) Recommended good practice examples

- In its submission, ANTaR provided examples of cultural competency tools for health and community services working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples designed by, or in collaboration with, Aboriginal organisations.<sup>57</sup>
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health has developed cultural awareness protocols and guidelines for members and staff working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations.<sup>58</sup>

## 4.11 Police and justice system

Participants in public meetings in most parts of the country raised concerns about over-policing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities, particularly involving young people in these communities.

The difficulty of proving racism in a complaint against police was raised, as was the need for independent commissions to investigate complaints of racism against police and instances of harassment of the person making a complaint by the officer who was the subject of that complaint. The need for cultural competency training for overseas born police officers in engaging with Aboriginal communities was also discussed.

Participants in the Kalgoorlie public meeting recommended that police should go out onto Aboriginal lands to learn about Aboriginal culture. Representatives of Victoria Police participating in the Shepparton public meeting noted that new Victoria Police officers go out with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Aboriginal Liaison Officers, and that this is made possible by supportive leadership within the police force.

### (a) Proposed strategies

- The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria recommended that the National Anti-Racism Strategy consider the recommendations made by the Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre in its 'Race or Reason' report and make use of the 'Safe Spaces' toolkit on young people and policing, published by the Springvale Monash Legal Service and the Western Suburbs Legal Service.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Australian Psychological Society, Submission 109.

<sup>55</sup> Australian Indigenous Psychological Society, Submission 110.

<sup>56</sup> Royal Australian College of General Practitioners National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health, Submission 64.

<sup>57</sup> Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and Women's Health Goulburn North East. *Making Two Worlds Work: building the capacity of the health and community sector to work effectively and respectfully with our Aboriginal community* (2008). At: <http://www.wheath.com.au/mtwvw/> (viewed 18 June 2012); Ngwala Willumbung Cooperative, *Koori Practice Checklist: A Cultural Audit Tool for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Sector* (2007). At: <http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/keyresources/promotion-resources?lid=15938> (viewed 18 June 2012). Cited in ANTaR, Submission 107.

<sup>58</sup> Royal Australian College of General Practitioners National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health, Submission 64.

<sup>59</sup> Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre, *Race or Reason? Police Encounters with Young People in the Flemington Region and Surrounding Areas* (2011). At: [http://www.communitylaw.org.au/flemingtonkensington/cb\\_pages/racialprofiling.php](http://www.communitylaw.org.au/flemingtonkensington/cb_pages/racialprofiling.php) (viewed 18 June 2012); Springvale Monash Legal Service and Western Suburbs Legal Service, *Safe Spaces: a Toolkit for Dealing with Police/Youth Conflict* (2012). At: <http://www.smhs.org.au/> (viewed 18 June 2012). Cited in Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Submission 88.

## 4.12 Law reform

A number of submissions made recommendations for law reform, most frequently in relation to racial vilification legislation.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry recommended that a review of the effectiveness of legislative provisions prohibiting racial vilification across Australia be undertaken through the National Anti-Racism Strategy. It recommended that such a review assess the failure of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* to criminalise racial vilification, as required by Article 4(a) of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), and identified the Western Australian criminal vilification provisions as a model.<sup>60</sup>

Both the Tasmanian Office of the Anti Discrimination Commission and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board recommended that Australia withdraw its reservation to Article 4(a) of ICERD.<sup>61</sup>

The submission by Mr Jeremy Jones recommended that the National Anti-Racism Strategy assess the progress made in implementing recommendations from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Inquiry into Racial Violence.<sup>62</sup>

The Australian Centre for Disability Law recommended that the consolidation process of federal anti-discrimination laws provide for complaints to be made on more than one ground of discrimination to recognise issues of intersectionality, such as between disability and race.<sup>63</sup>

The NSW Greens recommended the implementation of a Commonwealth Legislative Bill of Rights.<sup>64</sup>

## 4.13 Government – leadership and whole-of-government approaches

A strong theme to emerge from the consultations was the need for strong political leadership against racism by all levels of government and for politicians to 'stand up' against racism in the public arena.

The Australian Psychological Society recommended that members of Federal Parliament take part in anti-racism training programs conducted with the participation of members of groups affected by racism.<sup>65</sup>

Other recommendations included:

- that the National Anti-Racism Strategy be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments<sup>66</sup>
- that the National Anti-Racism Strategy indicate how the implementing Partnership proposes to engage with the different levels of government<sup>67</sup>
- that Australian Government grant programs, such as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Diversity and Social Cohesion grants program, have anti-racism-specific criteria and encourage research and advocacy, in addition to service delivery and cultural diversity<sup>68</sup>
- that the National Anti-Racism Strategy align closely with the National Social Inclusion Agenda and that the Partnership work closely with the Australian Social Inclusion Board to implement the Strategy<sup>69</sup>
- that the Australian Government introduce an Australian Multicultural Act modelled on the principles of the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*.<sup>70</sup>

A number of submissions highlighted the important role of local government in addressing racism at the community level. Yarra City Council noted that local government is well placed to identify key 'racism hot spots' and mentioned the work it had done with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to address racism in nightclubs.<sup>71</sup> Darebin City Council included the report of its Racism Inquiry in its submission<sup>72</sup> and both Yarra and Monash councils recommended that support be provided to councils to undertake anti-racism activities.<sup>73</sup>

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60 Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Submission 41.

61 Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commission, Submission 74; NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, Submission 103.

62 Mr Jeremy Jones, Submission 106.

63 Australian Centre for Disability Law, Submission 95.

64 NSW Greens, Submission 119.

65 Australian Psychological Society, Submission 109.

66 Women's Health West, Submission 70.

67 Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma, Submission 118.

68 All Together Now, Submission 47; Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Submission 88.

69 Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, Submission 116.

70 Victorian Multicultural Commission, Submission 90.

71 Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, *Race discrimination in clubs – everyone has the right to party*, [http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=1640:racediscrimination-in-clubs-everyone-has-the-right-to-party-apr-2012&Itemid=688#/!ts=1340002678852](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1640:racediscrimination-in-clubs-everyone-has-the-right-to-party-apr-2012&Itemid=688#/!ts=1340002678852) (viewed 18 June 2012), cited in Yarra City Council, Submission 65.

72 City of Darebin, <http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/racism> (viewed 18 June 2012).

73 Monash City Council, Submission 98.

Having multiple cultures work alongside each other is helpful, however ... True partnerships occur when people learn how to work together ...

#### 4.14 Community-building

*I have a Cambodian daughter-in-law and mixed-race grandchildren. I accompanied them to a mothers group at the library. Nobody talked to my daughter-in-law or the children until people realised I was with them. This makes me feel very sad and concerned for the potential difficulties in the future for my grandchildren.<sup>74</sup>*

The need for effective community-building and community engagement initiatives was frequently raised through the consultation process. For community engagement initiatives to represent good practice, it was recommended that they provide opportunities for meaningful engagement.

Desert Knowledge Australia stated:

*Cross cultural engagement has the potential to be counterproductive if care is not taken because, paradoxically, learning about other peoples' cultures or highlighting difference can increase the sense of difference and separation... It is only when people work towards a common purpose that the cultural divide decreases.*

*Having multiple cultures work alongside each other is helpful, however greater impact is achieved if programs or approaches provide explicit opportunities to challenge the way groups work together ... True partnerships occur when people learn how to work together, realising that they have to give up something to gain something more.<sup>75</sup>*

Participants made the point that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work and that different solutions are necessary for different communities. They also noted that governments or service providers 'doing things for communities' is not effective, rather communities need to be supported to develop their own resilience.

A wide range of initiatives were noted as demonstrating good practice in cross-community engagement and community building, including:

- Wandana Community Centre, SA community cultural exchange visits between women from the local Muslim and Aboriginal communities to challenge stereotypes held by these communities about each other<sup>76</sup>
- City of Monash 'Building Bridges' project and 'Human Library'<sup>77</sup>
- local reconciliation groups<sup>78</sup>
- City of Yarra 'welcoming ceremony' for international students<sup>79</sup>
- ACT Council of Social Service Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit<sup>80</sup>
- Melaleuca Refugee Centre in Darwin, which promotes interaction between community, migrants and refugees.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Anonymous response, online survey.

<sup>75</sup> Desert Knowledge Australia, oral submission, received 11 May 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Community Centres South Australia, Submission 40.

<sup>77</sup> City of Monash, Submission 98.

<sup>78</sup> ANTaR, Submission 107.

<sup>79</sup> City of Yarra, Submission 65.

<sup>80</sup> ACT Council of Social Services, *Cultural Awareness Self-assessment Toolkit: Good practice standards for culturally appropriate community services* (2009). At: <http://www.actcoss.org.au/oik/sections/standards.html> (viewed 18 June 2012). Cited in ACT Council of Social Services, Submission 60.

<sup>81</sup> Refugee Council of Australia, Submission 77.

When we're 'good' we're Australians, when we're 'bad' we're Lebanese.

*I don't think the onus should be entirely upon 'white Australians' as I have personally experienced both the joys and difficulties in reaching out to different groups and there are real barriers erected on both sides.<sup>82</sup>*

Another issue raised was the need for leadership and mentoring programs to support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and young people from new and emerging communities to become leaders, with the Western Young Peoples' Independent Network in Victoria mentioned as a good model in a number of submissions.<sup>83</sup>

The lack of positive role models of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD people in public life in Australia was frequently noted as indirectly contributing to negative stereotypes of members of certain racial and ethnic groups. As one participant in the Canberra public meeting noted:

*When we're 'good' we're Australians, when we're 'bad' we're Lebanese.*

The need for strategies to address racism, prejudice and stereotypes between migrant communities was also raised in a number of submissions. It was seen as a particular issue in schools, where teachers can struggle to manage classrooms or playgrounds with 'blocks' of students from CALD backgrounds that have historically been opposed to each other.

*Multiculturalism is a double-edged sword. What we want is a peaceful Australia made up of people of diverse backgrounds able to celebrate their own culture within the context of the broader traditional Australian culture and lifestyle.<sup>84</sup>*

#### 4.15 Addressing systemic racism

A strong theme that came through the consultation process was the need to clearly name systemic and institutional racism in the National Anti-Racism Strategy and develop effective, multi-dimensional strategies to address these forms of racism.

Participants frequently said that the most pervasive experiences of racism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD people are often the subtle – and not so subtle – daily occurrences. In its submission, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association described racism as 'a constant background 'noise' that exists in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people',<sup>85</sup> while the Metro Migrant Resource Centre recounted the experiences of people of CALD backgrounds being followed in shops, isolated on public transport and continually coming into contact with the police.<sup>86</sup>

*(Racism) affects (us) in a huge way. People don't get jobs they deserve as per their skills and qualifications. Their rent applications are not considered fairly. At workplaces they don't get due respect and justice, paid and promoted fairly. They are spoken to in a rude way in public and nobody cares ... renting next to a racist person can create problems through untrue complaints to real estate of noise or anything vague. This is all out of my own experience.<sup>87</sup>*

82 Australian Christians, online submission.

83 Western Young Peoples' Independent Network, <http://www.wypin.org.au/> (viewed 18 June 2012).

84 Malaysia Club of Queensland, online submission Australian Human Rights Commission.

85 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association, Submission 91.

86 Metro Migrant Resource Centre, Submission 59.

87 Anonymous response, online survey.

In his submission, Dr Gilbert Caluya provided a review of the different kinds of initiatives employed in Australia to address racism, analysing them by how they perceive racism: as cultural ignorance; as a belief system; as a social norm; or as exclusion. He argued that initiatives to address racism can be ineffective, and may cause greater harm, when they are based in a poor understanding of the type of racism they are trying to address.<sup>88</sup>

A number of submissions stated that the National Anti-Racism Strategy should address structural racism and the power inequalities which underlie racism.

The Australian Psychological Society recommended that the definition of racism adopted by the Strategy reflect racism as being ‘deeply rooted within historical, cultural and power inequalities in society’.<sup>89</sup> ANTaR’s submission adopted a broad definition of racism as ‘any treatment that results in unequal power, resources or opportunities across racial, ethnic, cultural and/or religious groups’.<sup>90</sup>

The University of Sydney Institute of Democracy and Human Rights proposed the inclusion of an additional objective addressing systemic racism in the National Anti-Racism Strategy, as well as the:

- formal acknowledgement by the Australian Government of the legacy of racially discriminatory laws, policies and institutions on individuals and groups in the Australian community
- establishment of effective data collection practices to measure Australia’s performance in ensuring substantive equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD peoples, and
- use of special measures, as per articles 1.4 and 2.2 of ICERD, to contribute to achieving substantive equality for these groups.<sup>91</sup>

#### (a) Proposed strategies

A number of submissions recommended a multi-layered framework for addressing the different manifestations of racism, similar to the model advocated by VicHealth in its ‘Building on our Strengths framework’.<sup>92</sup>

Some respondents also argued that there are similarities between racism and violence against women; particularly that it is often invisible to those not experiencing it. It was suggested that a multi-faceted approach be adopted to address racism, similar to the recommended approach for addressing violence against women, which includes crisis response, support for at-risk groups and a focus on prevention.

Desert Knowledge Australia cautioned that strategies to address systemic racism should not unintentionally perpetuate power imbalances. It proposed a model of a ‘power triangle’ where people or groups can fall into one of three categories – the victim, the perpetrator or the ‘rescuer’ – and noted that people can ‘cycle’ through these positions depending on circumstance and perspective. For example, individuals who perpetrate racism can do so out of a sense of disempowerment, while ‘victims’ of racism can themselves victimise others. Desert Knowledge Australia recommended that this model be considered when developing strategies and approaches for tackling racism.<sup>93</sup>

In its submission the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia proposed a 13 point plan for countering racism in Australia, including:

- a focus on addressing covert racism
- ensuring communities are given tools to act when they are witness to racism; and
- taking a position of ‘equality for all’.<sup>94</sup>

Many respondents also recommended the establishment of a website or online clearinghouse of good practice resources for addressing racism.

A recurring theme throughout the consultation process was that three years is insufficient time for a National Anti-Racism Strategy to be effective. Initiatives established through the Strategy need to be ongoing, sustainable and supported by governments over the long term.

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88 Dr Gilbert Caluya, Submission 97.

89 Australian Psychological Society, Submission 109.

90 ANTaR, Submission 107.

91 University of Sydney Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, Submission 29.

92 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, *Building on our strengths: a framework to reduce racebased discrimination and support diversity in Victoria* (2009). At: <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Publications/Freedom-from-discrimination/Building-on-ourstrengths.aspx> (viewed 18 June 2012).

93 Desert Knowledge Australia, oral submission, received 11 May 2012.

94 Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia, Submission 66.

#### (b) Recommended good practice examples

- Women's Health West 'Girls Talk/Guys Talk' action research anti-racism project, which had a focus on safe ways to discuss racism and strategies to tackle it, including a whole-of-school approach.<sup>95</sup>
- Hobart College Students Against Racism 'Living in Between project'.<sup>96</sup>
- Australian Psychological Society Moving Beyond Racism tip sheet.<sup>97</sup>

### 4.16 Strategies to help individuals address racism

Consultation participants suggested a range of strategies to empower those who experience and those who witness racism. The most frequently recommended were:

- making processes to report racist incidents and race discrimination more accessible
- establishing a central portal of information about legal rights and reporting processes
- providing adequate funding to complaint-handling bodies, and
- providing support for complainants.

Carers QLD recommended that anti-discrimination bodies set up intake offices in places that are 'close and approachable', such as community centres and health centres.

Participants in the Mount Gambier public meeting highlighted the need for specific support and assistance for people living in country areas.

A number of submissions recommended the establishment of third-party reporting processes, through which affected individuals and communities could report incidents of racial violence to a body other than police. The former 'Community Alert Against Racist Violence' project of the Uniting Church and the Australian Institute of Criminology 'was recommended as a model, while the Tasmanian Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner highlighted its racist violence incident reporting form developed with the support of the federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship'.<sup>98</sup>

Other strategies suggested included:

- publicising complaint processes through settlement services to ensure that new arrivals are aware that racism is against the law and they can do something about it: participants in the Parramatta public meeting also noted the need to train staff in services working with migrants to support them in addressing racism
- working with affected communities to develop a 'racism training package' to help them address different forms of racism and racist incidents, learn how to exercise personal safety, understand their legal rights and know how to use the legal system to seek redress
- making better use of social media; for example, by developing a mobile phone app through which people can make discrimination complaints.

*Bystanders should be given a number that people can SMS immediately.*<sup>99</sup>

#### (a) Recommended good practice examples

- Southern Poverty Law Centre 'Speak Up' materials.<sup>100</sup>
- Legal Aid NSW, Kingsford Legal Centre and Elizabeth Evatt Legal Centre 'Discrimination Toolkit'.<sup>101</sup>
- 'Speaking up against racism' sections on the All Together Now and ANTaR websites.<sup>102</sup>

### 4.17 Developing an anti-racism campaign

*In many cases people do not recognise their words and deeds are racist. It's simply seen as part of Australian culture to 'take the piss' out of people. I don't see that casual racism, via ignorant commentary or jokes, is acceptable. People who perceive they have the right and luxury to engage in racist practices do not understand that they are adding to a lifetime of injury for those of us who have had to navigate racism.*<sup>103</sup>

95 Women's Health West, *Girls Talk/Guys Talk*, <http://www.whwest.org.au/community/schools.php> (viewed 17 June 2012).

96 Tasmanian Centre for Global Learning, *Living in Between*, [http://www.afairerworld.org/\\_Current\\_projects/lib.html](http://www.afairerworld.org/_Current_projects/lib.html) (viewed 17 June 2012).

97 Australian Psychological Society, *Moving Beyond Racism*, [http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip\\_sheets/beyond/](http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip_sheets/beyond/) (viewed 17 June 2012).

98 Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Submission 75.

99 Anonymous response, online survey.

100 Southern Poverty Law Centre, *Speak Up*, <http://www.tolerance.org/publication/speak/speak> (viewed 17 June 2012).

101 Legal Aid NSW, *Discrimination Toolkit*, <http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/get-legal-help/factsheets-and-resources/discrimination-toolkit> (viewed 17 June 2012).

102 All Together Now, <http://www.alltogethernow.org.au/racism/speak-up> (viewed 17 June 2012); ANTaR, [http://www.antar.org.au/issues\\_and\\_campaigns/health/racism/speak\\_up\\_against\\_racism](http://www.antar.org.au/issues_and_campaigns/health/racism/speak_up_against_racism) (viewed 17 June 2012).

103 Anonymous response, online survey.

A range of suggestions were provided as possible themes for anti-racism campaigns, such as:

- building empathy through using a ‘walk in my shoes’ approach, such as asking ‘What if this person was your mother/sister?’
- communicating with young people that racism is ‘un-Australian’
- focusing on our shared humanity – ‘everyone belongs’ – and what we have in common
- identifying the damage caused by racism – that ‘racism harms us all’
- presenting facts to correct the misconceptions that can lead to racism, such as the number of asylum-seeker arrivals who arrive by plane compared to those arriving by boat
- targeting negative perceptions of asylum-seekers; for example, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre shared its slogan ‘Australia – Built by Boat People’<sup>104</sup>
- addressing unconscious biases and raising awareness of prejudice.

*In my experience there can be a perception amongst people that racism is a binary – you are racist, or you are not racist – and that people who are racist are really racist and hold attitudes like apartheid South Africa. In reality, racism is more of a spectrum ... We live in a society that is racist (or to put it another way, which privileges some races over others) and it is practically impossible not to pick up some racist thinking as a result.<sup>105</sup>*

Other themes included:

- sharing stories of people and communities successfully tackling racism emphasising that it’s ‘ok to be different’ and that Australia has always had different cultures
- projecting a vision of a society without racism
- articulating shared values of who we are as Australians
- challenging and confronting racist behaviour in a manner similar to hard-hitting anti-smoking campaigns
- moving beyond ‘harmony’ and ‘tolerance’ to focus on acceptance and respect.

*A good anti-racism campaign would give the public the opportunity to learn the effects of racism on Aboriginal, refugee and marginalised people, with the opportunity to react appropriately to the situation, rather than with hostility, denial or apathy.<sup>106</sup>*

All Together Now recommended a focus on hope, not fear, and that any campaign should take account of the social marketing principles of ‘ability, opportunity and motivation’.<sup>107</sup> The Challenging Racism research team recommended that the campaign point out the incongruities between peoples’ positive attitudes and racist behaviour.<sup>108</sup>

*Don’t just walk by but assess what would help and what will escalate violence ... it would be very good if people were more educated on how to be an active bystander ... maybe that’s a good ad campaign!<sup>109</sup>*

*Encourage all Australians to meet someone from a diverse background, to talk to their next door neighbour, to try something different from time to time.<sup>110</sup>*

#### (a) Recommended good practice examples

- The SBS programme ‘Go Back to Where You Came From’ was frequently cited as an effective example of challenging racist attitudes.
- Beyond Blue is developing a community awareness campaign addressing the impact of discrimination on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) communities and a similar approach could inform an anti-racism campaign.<sup>111</sup>
- ANTaR’s ‘Racism Makes Me Sick’ and ‘Respect’ campaigns with The Body Shop.<sup>112</sup>

104 Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Submission 49.

105 Anonymous response, online survey.

106 Ms Nathalie Haymann Submission 62

107 All Together Now, Submission 47.

108 Challenging Racism, Submission 82.

109 Anonymous response, online survey.

110 Carers QLD, online submission.

111 Beyond Blue, Submission 52.

112 ANTaR, Submission 107.

# For the National Anti-Racism Strategy to be considered a success, what will be different in Australia five years from now?

*The colour of someone's skin will not matter. The gap between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the rest of Australia will have closed significantly.*

*Australians are more realistic about the country's problems with racism and are more willing to address it and abolish it. They are at least ready to accept it exists.*

*A substantial decline in reports of racism, zero tolerance policy to racism and increased penalties for perpetrators of racism. The debate over asylum seekers and refugees is put into proper perspective. Our politicians have stopped using people as pawns to advance their political careers.*

*The media is held much more accountable for inciting hatred or perpetuating misinformation and fear.*

*People will recognise their own racist attitudes as racist and will work on confronting them. People will feel ashamed to express their racist ideas publicly because they will know that "Australia" does not agree with them.*

*A framework for schools to address racism would be developed and implemented across all government schools including a reporting requirement for principals.*

*Workplaces would understand tangible examples of racism and there would be a zero tolerance policy for perpetrators. Sporting clubs would be public champions for tackling racism. People of different cultures will feel safe in the streets, online and in their workplaces. They will feel that they make a valuable contribution in bringing their culture to their chosen country. People will be focussing on what unites us as Australians rather than difference.*

*A dark skinned woman wearing a veil will not cause a second thought; a dark skinned male wearing a hoodie will not be suspected; our kids will experience diversity ... and not even notice.*

# 5 Where to from here

The National Anti-Racism Strategy will be launched in 2012 and will focus on building close partnerships with individuals and organisations from all parts of the Australian community.

It has been designed to complement, reinforce and build on existing anti-racism initiatives in different parts of the country. Under the overarching Anti-Racism Strategy, there will be a public campaign ‘Racism. It stops with me’. High-profile individuals and organisations will be invited to endorse the campaign and identify specific activities they can take to support their stance against racism. A communications strategy will also be implemented to create awareness of racism and what ordinary Australians can do about it.

Through its implementation, the National Anti-Racism Strategy intends to generate sustained momentum towards three important goals:

- more Australians will recognise that racism continues to be a serious issue in our community
- more Australians will get involved in practical action to tackle racism, wherever they see it
- individuals will have the resources they need to address racism they encounter, to access legal protections and, where necessary, to obtain redress.

The National Anti-Racism Strategy has been directly shaped by the views of Australians from all parts of the country. The Australian Human Rights Commission would like to thank all the individuals and organisations that participated in a public meeting, made a submission or completed an online survey during the Strategy consultation process.

Despite the difficulties that Australia continues to face in preventing and responding to racism, the consultation process painted a vivid picture of a country with many positive examples of engagement between people of different races, ethnicities and cultures, and a clear willingness to build on these in future. These characteristics provide a strong foundation for the activities of the National Anti-Racism Strategy in coming years.

# Appendices

Appendix A: National Anti-Racism Strategy  
online survey

Appendix B: Consultation dates and locations

Appendix C: List of submissions received

# Appendix A

## National Anti-Racism Strategy online survey

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**1. How important an issue is racism in Australia? <rank>**

- 1 Extremely important
- 2 Very important
- 3 Somewhat important
- 4 Not very important
- 5 Not at all important

**2. How does racism make you feel?**

**3. Who do you think experiences racism in Australia?**

**4. How does racism affect the Australian community?**

5. **Have you experienced racism? yes / no**

*If no, go to next question*

*If yes, Did you speak up or take action? yes / no*

*If yes, What did you do?*

*If no, What would have helped you to speak up or take action?*

6. **Who is responsible for addressing racism in Australia?**

7. **The most important areas in which we should be addressing racism in Australia are:  
<rank 1-6>**

- Schools and higher education
- Workplaces
- Sport
- Government service providers
- Media
- The internet
- Other – please describe .....

**8. The National Anti-Racism Strategy should be targeted towards: <rank 1-4>**

- Individuals and communities who experience racism
- Those who perpetrate racism
- Those who witness incidents of racism (bystanders) to encourage them to speak up
- The general community
- Other – please describe .....

**9. The National Anti-Racism Strategy should: <rank 1-6>**

- Focus on public messages about the importance of addressing racism in Australia
- Develop educational resources to combat racism in Australia
- Give examples of best practice in addressing racism
- Provide resources to implement a zero tolerance policy to racism in the workplace
- Provide information about remedies to address racism
- Enable people to pledge their support for a ‘racism free Australia’
- Other – please describe .....

**10. For the National Anti-Racism Strategy to be considered a success, what will be different in Australia, 5 years from now?**

# Appendix B

## Consultation dates and locations

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|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 22 March     | Hobart, TAS   |
| 30 March     | Broadmeadows, VIC   |
| 30 March     | Kalgoorlie, WA<br><i>Hosted by the Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia</i>  |
| 30 March     | Kalgoorlie, WA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation)<br><i>Hosted by the Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia</i> |
| 11 April     | Shepparton, VIC<br><i>Hosted by the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission</i>   |
| 11 April     | Alice Springs, NT   |
| 13 April     | Perth, WA<br><i>Hosted by the Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia and the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre</i>           |
| 13 April     | Mt Gambier, SA<br><i>Hosted by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission</i>  |
| 16 April     | Perth, WA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation)<br><i>Hosted by the Equal Opportunity Commission of Western Australia</i>      |
| 19 April     | Darwin, NT<br><i>Hosted by the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission</i>  |
| 20 April     | Townsville, QLD<br><i>Hosted by the Anti-Discrimination Commission QLD</i>  |
| 23 April     | Brisbane, QLD<br><i>Hosted by the Anti-Discrimination Commission QLD</i>  |
| 23 /24 April | Adelaide, SA<br><i>Hosted by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission and Migrant Resource Centre South Australia</i>                |
| 26 April     | Canberra, ACT   |
| 27 April     | Wagga Wagga, NSW  |
| 30 April     | Port Augusta, SA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation)<br><i>Hosted by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission</i>   |
| 3 May        | Dubbo, NSW  |
| 8 May        | Parramatta, NSW   |
| 10 May       | Adelaide, SA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation)<br><i>Hosted by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission</i>       |
| 11 May       | Mt Gambier, SA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation)<br><i>Hosted by the South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission</i>     |

# Appendix C

## List of submissions received

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- 1 Philip Letchford
- 2 Aileen Ferguson
- 3 Alfred Schenk
- 4 Phil Johnson
- 5 Saul Moss
- 6 Bill Glavin
- 7 Name withheld
- 8 Denis Mulheron
- 9 Confidential
- 10 Glenn Davis
- 11 Michael Correll
- 12 Mike Prowse
- 13 John Murphy
- 14 Robert Cassidy
- 15 Patrick McCauley
- 16 Confidential
- 17 Confidential
- 18 Name withheld
- 19 Daniel Willoughby
- 20 Bob Napier
- 21 Heather D'Cruz
- 22 Colin Delane
- 23 Confidential
- 24 Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association
- 25 Confidential
- 26 Confidential
- 27 Brad Pope
- 28 Confidential
- 29 Institute for Democracy and Human Rights
- 30 Garry Hogan
- 31 Confidential
- 32 Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre
- 33 Chinese Community Council of Australia (VIC chapter)
- 34 Elaine Page
- 35 Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network NSW
- 36 Jatinder Kaur
- 37 City of Whittlesea
- 38 Peter Evans
- 39 Women's Legal Centre
- 40 Community Centres SA Inc.
- 41 Executive Council of Australian Jewry
- 42 Patricia Wagstaff
- 43 Haydn Rigby
- 44 Chinese Association of South Australia
- 45 Liverpool MRC
- 46 Dr Peter Gale

- 47 All Together Now  
48 Susan Burke  
49 Asylum Seeker Resource Centre  
50 Lin Morrow  
51 Confidential  
52 Beyond Blue  
53 City of Darebin  
54 Netball Australia  
55 Adelaide Migrant Health Service  
56 Confidential  
57 Confidential  
58 Confidential  
59 Metro MRC  
60 ACTCOSS  
61 Name withheld  
62 Nathalie Haymann  
63 John King  
64 National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health,  
Royal Australian College of General Practitioners  
65 Yarra City Council  
66 Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia  
67 Townsville Multicultural Support Group  
68 Civil Celebration Network Inc.  
69 NSW Aboriginal Land Council  
70 Women's Health West  
71 Human Rights and Security Cluster, University of South Australia  
72 Barbara Baird  
73 Australian Baha'i Community  
74 Human Rights are Aussie Rules Project  
75 Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Tasmania  
76 Shelter S.A.  
77 Refugee Council of Australia  
78 Confidential  
79 SBS  
80 Student Representative Council, University of Sydney  
81 Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory  
82 Challenging Racism Project  
83 Anti-racism academics  
84 Media RING  
85 Reconciliation Australia

- 86 Youth Art for Change forum
- 87 Mental Health in Multicultural Australia
- 88 Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria
- 89 Access Community Services Limited
- 90 Victorian Multicultural Commission
- 91 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Co-Op. Ltd
- 92 Anne Barton
- 93 Ken Brookes
- 94 Confidential
- 95 Australian Centre for Disability Law
- 96 James Cook University students
- 97 Dr Gilbert Caluya
- 98 City of Monash
- 99 Ballarat Catholic Social Justice Commission
- 100 Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia and the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition
- 101 Malcolm Brandon
- 102 Settlement Council of Australia
- 103 Confidential
- 104 ACT Torres Strait Islanders Corporation
- 105 Ethnic Communities' Council of Queensland
- 106 Jeremy Jones AM
- 107 Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation
- 108 ACT Human Rights Commission
- 109 Australian Psychological Society
- 110 Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association
- 111 Confidential
- 112 Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland
- 113 Law Society of the Northern Territory
- 114 Ipswich Community Cultural Leaders
- 115 Confidential
- 116 Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council
- 117 Cultural Intelligence
- 118 Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
- 119 The Greens NSW
- 120 Australians Indigenous Doctors' Association
- 121 Chairman, South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission
- 122 National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
- 123 Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council

- Further Information

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Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**



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**Attorney-General's Department**



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**Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

