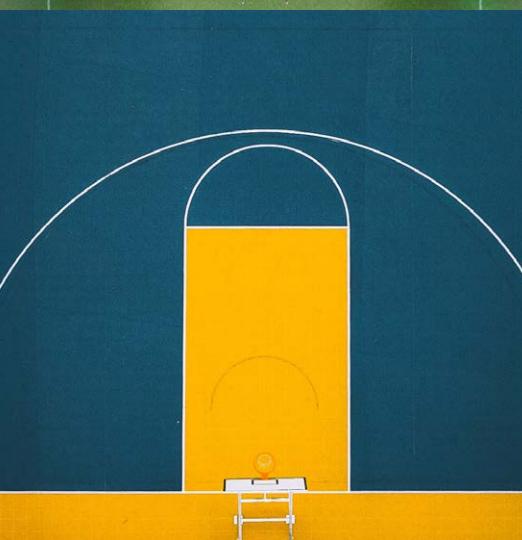
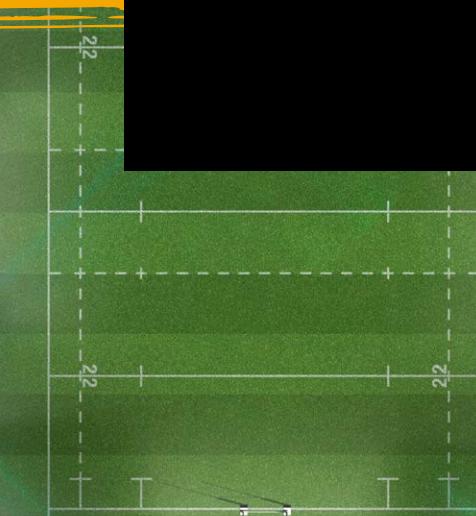


**RACISM.  
IT STOPS  
WITH ME**

**RACISM.  
NOBODY WINS.**

**DEFINITIONS OF  
KEY TERMS**



**Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission**

**RACISM.  
NOBODY WINS.**

## DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

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**RACISM.  
NOBODY WINS.**

## DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

### RACISM

Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin. People often associate racism with acts of abuse or harassment. However, it doesn't need to involve violent or intimidating behaviour.

Racism can be revealed through people's actions as well as their attitudes. It can also be reflected in systems and institutions that operate in ways that lead to unequal outcomes. Racism is more than just words, beliefs and actions. It includes all the barriers that prevent people from enjoying dignity and equality because of their race.<sup>1</sup>

#### RACISM CAN BE:

**Interpersonal racism** – this occurs during interactions between individuals and can include, making negative comments about a particular ethnic group in person or online, calling others racist names, and bullying, hassling or intimidating others because of their race.

**Institutional racism** – encompasses the policies, practices and procedures that inform and direct the everyday operation of organisations, businesses and enterprises.<sup>2</sup> An example of this would be an organisation banning the use of swimming caps created specifically for individuals with black hair, as enforcement of such a rule prevents and excludes the participation of members from some culturally diverse communities in sports.<sup>3</sup>

**Systemic racism** – refers to the history, ideology, culture and interactions of institutions and policies that work together to perpetuate inequity. It describes the way in which institutions and structures fail to provide adequate service provision and equal opportunities to people because of their racial or cultural background. Systemic racism is responsible for certain communities experiencing poor life outcomes, lower pay, and less opportunities for advancement within leadership positions.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes groups and organisations can have rules that seem to be fair to everyone, but they actually make things more difficult for people from particular cultural or ethnic backgrounds. For example, when an organisation has a policy of not hiring people who have been educated at an overseas school or university.<sup>5</sup>

### ANTI-RACISM

Anti-racism is an active process, unlike the passive stance of ‘non-racism’. Anti-racism work requires consistent, committed and targeted action and attention. Racism operates at systemic, institutional, interpersonal and individual levels. Typically, individual and interpersonal racism receives more focus than institutional and systemic racism, and as a result deeper, systemic racial injustice continues to flourish. Anti-racism involves focusing on systemic racism.<sup>6</sup>

### RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities, as others in a similar situation, because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin or their skin colour. The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA) for example makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person in Australia because of their race, colour, descent, national origin or ethnic origin, or immigrant status. The RDA protects people from racial discrimination in many areas of public life, including employment, education, getting or using services, renting or buying a house or unit, and accessing public places.<sup>7</sup>

Racial hatred is also unlawful under the RDA. Racial hatred involves behaviour such as saying something in public that is reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate a person or group because of their race, colour, or national or ethnic origin.<sup>8</sup> Some limited exemptions and exceptions apply.

### HARASSMENT

Harassment can be against the law when a person is treated less favourably on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as race. Some limited exemptions and exceptions apply.

**Harassment can include behaviour such as:**

- telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- making derogatory comments or taunts about someone’s race.

The law also has specific provisions relating to certain types of harassment, including:

- offensive behaviour based on racial hatred is against the law. Racial hatred is defined as something done in public that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates a person or group of people because of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

A one-off incident can constitute harassment. All incidents of harassment require employers or managers to respond quickly and appropriately.

Employers can also be held liable for harassment by their employees. This is called ‘vicarious liability’.<sup>9</sup>

### VICTIMISATION

The legal definition of victimisation is when someone “subjects or threatens to subject the other person to any detriment”. Victimisation is treating someone badly or unfairly, or threatening to treat someone badly or unfairly, because they have asserted their rights under the law, made a complaint about discrimination or racial and religious vilification, helped someone else make a complaint, or it is believed they intend to make a complaint. Victimisation is against the law.<sup>10</sup>

### BYSTANDER

A person or persons, not directly involved as a target or perpetrator, who observes an act of racially motivated violence, discrimination or other unacceptable or offensive behaviour.<sup>11</sup> Although not actively partaking in racist conduct, bystanders have a choice to respond to these incidents. Bystander actions may include aiming to stop the perpetrator of racism, reducing its escalation, supporting a target of racism, formally reporting the incident or seeking assistance from others.<sup>12</sup> Often, someone who chooses to take action in this instance is called an Upstander.<sup>13</sup>

### TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Trauma-informed practice is a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and that creates opportunities for survivors of trauma to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Becoming trauma-informed is about supporting people to feel safe in their interactions with others in their environments. Trauma-informed approaches utilise meaningful collaboration with people who have experienced trauma, to design organisations which accommodate the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors and minimise the risk of re-traumatisation.<sup>14</sup> In regard to racial trauma, typically this would involve consultation with people who are the targets of racism and acting on their thoughts and ideas on how to address racism.

### SUPERVISORS

This covers a broad range of roles and responsibilities typically found in sporting organisations, such as coaches, officials, ground managers, classifiers, chaperones and other roles where supervision of participants is a requirement.

### TARGET (OF RACISM)

The term ‘target’ of racism is used throughout the spectator racism resources. This refers to the person/s who are recipients of racism and the targets of abuse. This term is preferred to other terms, such as *victim*, as it is a neutral term that is not disempowering to individuals who are targets of abuse.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Australian Human Rights Commission, ‘What is Racism?’, *Race Discrimination* (Web Page) <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism>

<sup>2</sup>‘Learn more about racism’, *Creative Equity Toolkit* (Web Page) <https://creativeequitytoolkit.org/topic/organisational-culture/racism/>

<sup>3</sup>Priya Elan, ‘Swimming caps for natural black hair rules out of Olympic Games’, The Guardian (Online Article, 2 July 2021) <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jul/02/swimming-caps-for-natural-black-hair-ruled-out-of-olympic-games-alice-dearing>; Evan Nicole Brown, ‘How a Ban on a Swim Cap Galvanized Black Swimmers’, *The New York Times* (Online Article, 1 August 2021) <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/14/style/olympics-soul-cap-ban-swimming.html>

<sup>4</sup>‘Learn more about racism’, *Creative Equity Toolkit* (Web Page) <https://creativeequitytoolkit.org/topic/organisational-culture/racism/>

<sup>5</sup>Australian Human Rights Commission, ‘What is Racism?’, *Race Discrimination* (Web Page) <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism>

<sup>6</sup>‘Learn more about racism’, *Creative Equity Toolkit* (Web Page) <https://creativeequitytoolkit.org/topic/organisational-culture/racism/>

<sup>7</sup>Australian Human Rights Commission, *Racial Discrimination* (Report, November 2014) [https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPGB\\_racial\\_discrimination.pdf](https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPGB_racial_discrimination.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>Australian Human Rights Commission, *Racial Discrimination* (Report, November 2014) [https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPGB\\_racial\\_discrimination.pdf](https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPGB_racial_discrimination.pdf)

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## DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

<sup>9</sup>'Harassment', *Australian Human Rights Commission* (Web Page)  
<https://humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12040>

<sup>10</sup>'Victimisation', *Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission* (Web Page)  
<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/victimisation/>

<sup>11</sup>Zachary Russell et al, *Choosing to act: Bystander action to prevent race-based discrimination and support cultural diversity in the Victorian Community* (Research report, June 2013) 3.

<sup>12</sup>Jacqueline K. Nelson, Kevin M. Dunn and Yin Paradies, 'Bystander Anti-Racism: A Review of the Literature' (2011) 11(1) *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 263, 264-265.

<sup>13</sup>ReachOut, 'How to be an Upstander', *Bystander* (Web Page)  
<https://au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-be-an-upstander>

<sup>14</sup>'Trauma-informed Services', *Blue Knot Foundation* (Web Page)  
<https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/resources/trauma-informed-services/>

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This resource has been created by the Australian Human Rights Commission, in collaboration with national, state and territory-based sporting organisations and venues. For additional resources and information about the project, please visit <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/%20guide-addressing-spectator-racism-sports-2021>.