



*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission*

Report to the Department of Immigration and  
Citizenship (DlaC)

on the

## **Unlocking Doors Project**

**March 2007**

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Citizenship.

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## List of acronyms

ADB	Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
COPS	Computerised Operational Policing System
ECLO	Ethnic Community Liaison Officer (NSW)
EOCV	Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
LAC	Local Area Command
LEAP	Law Enforcement Assistance Program
MLO	Multicultural Liaison Officer (Victoria)
PCYC	Police and Community Youth Clubs or Police-Citizens Youth Clubs
RDA	<i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i>
YLO	Youth Liaison Officer (NSW and Victoria)

## Forward

The *Unlocking Doors Project* was a series of forums, workshops and consultations conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission throughout 2006, which brought Muslim peoples and communities in New South Wales and Victoria into a dialogue with Police. This dialogue sought to strengthen Muslim peoples' relationship with law enforcement agencies and build on the capacity of the police to respond to the incidents of racial and religious hatred and abuse currently being experienced by Muslim peoples. The project was funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (then the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs).



The following report records the *Unlocking Doors Project*: the dialogue that took place between Muslim peoples and police as well as the goals, processes and outcomes of the project. Through the dialogue a range of issues were identified by participants along with the strategies that might address these. Another important component of the project was education and information sharing. Through workshops and information sessions the community and police became aware of the legal avenues that are currently available to address racial and religious discrimination and hatred.

I hope that this report provides a useful resource for individuals, community, police and governments to consider the issue of racial and religious discrimination and hatred: how this is being experienced by Muslim peoples and communities and how police and other institutions can best respond to this experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Calma'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Tom Calma  
National Race Discrimination Commissioner  
August 2007

# **1. What is the Unlocking Doors project?**

## **1.1 *This Report***

In December 2005 the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs funded the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) to conduct the Unlocking Doors project.

This Report is a summary of the Unlocking Doors project.

## **1.2 *What are the aims of the Unlocking Doors project?***

The aim of the Unlocking Doors project was to facilitate dialogue between Muslim communities and police in NSW and Victoria, in order to build on the capacity of police to respond to incidents of racial or religious hatred and abuse.

Specific project aims were as follows:

1. work with, and develop resources for, law enforcement agencies to better enable them to assist victims of racial or religious hatred and abuse
2. strengthen Muslim communities' relationship with law enforcement agencies, and inform community members of the legal avenues and services available to them as victims of racial and / or religious hatred and abuse including state and federal anti-discrimination laws and complaints processes and police processes
3. identify any particular issues for diverse Muslim groups such as Muslims in regional areas, youth and women, in order to ensure that police take their needs into account when responding to claims of racial and religious hatred and abuse
4. assist in the development of strategies that will better enable law enforcement agencies to deal with acts of racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslim people
5. as a result of the above, improve the extent to which acts of racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslim people are being monitored and responded to by police.

Unlocking Doors was about both police and communities tackling discrimination and abuse against Muslims in NSW and Victoria. It was about 'opening the doors' to communication between police and communities, doors

which in some instances may inhibit the successful prevention of crime with an element of racial or religious hatred, and other racist incidents. See Appendix 1 for a Project Description.

### **1.3 Why did HREOC conduct the Unlocking Doors project?**

In 2003 HREOC conducted a series of consultations – called *Ismaʿ* (or ‘Listen’ in Arabic) - in response to increasing concerns expressed by Arab and Muslim organisations about the rise in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice in Australia. During the *Ismaʿ* consultations many Muslims and Arabs in Australia reported experiencing various forms of prejudice because of their race or religion.

The *Ismaʿ* Report<sup>1</sup> found that most incidents raised in the consultations were not reported to police or other government authorities for various reasons, including a general lack of trust in authority.

The *Ismaʿ* Report advised that mechanisms for building trust between Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies were required in order to reduce the risk of further marginalisation of Arab and Muslim communities, in particular, in young people and women.

HREOC continues to hear from a range of Arab and Muslim community members and organisations, including throughout the current project, about incidence of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice. International and domestic events, including the London attacks and the Cronulla riots, ensure that Muslim communities in particular continue to be the subject of verbal and physical attack.

Unlocking Doors aimed to further the *Ismaʿ* recommendations by working closely with communities and police in NSW and Victoria, in order to identify practical strategies for building trust and understanding between the two groups in these states.

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<sup>1</sup> HREOC, *Ismaʿ National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians*, 2004.

## **2. How was the Unlocking Doors project conducted?**

### **2.1 *Audit of initiatives related to police and Muslim communities***

The Race Discrimination Unit, HREOC, completed an audit of existing programs, initiatives and resources used by a variety of organisations across Australia addressing issues of policing and Muslim communities. The audit is included as Appendix 2.

The audit is designed to be a working document to which new resources will be added from time to time and when the need arises.

The audit shows that there are a number of existing and past programs and initiatives by police, other government agencies and communities in NSW and Victoria.

For example, the introduction of Youth Liaison Officers (YLOs) and Ethnic Community Liaison Officers (ECLOs) by NSW police, and YLOs and Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs) by Victoria police is one important initiative which has been viewed positively by both police and communities during the Unlocking Doors project. The audit also lists a variety of projects initiated by local police commands or regions, including formal and informal activities for police and community interaction, the development of resources, and surveys of, and consultations with, local communities.

NSW and Victoria Police have a range of policies in place to address issues of cultural diversity both within the workforce and within the communities which they serve. For example, the NSW Police Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement demonstrates the NSW Police efforts to address the impact of racism, discrimination and vilification on the communities of NSW. NSW Police has also recently published its 'NSW Police Priorities for Working in a Culturally, Linguistically and Religiously Diverse Society 2006-2009' to 'facilitate greater awareness of police roles and responsibilities within our community and other government and non-government agencies'.

In addition, there are many community-based initiatives relevant to policing and Muslim communities, for example the Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) conducts cross cultural training of Victorian police, as well as a Crime Prevention and Community Safety Project.

The body of this Report does not describe all these initiatives in any detail, although many of them were mentioned during the Unlocking Doors consultations and forums, especially as models for the development of further



strategies. However, the audit can be used to highlight the range of these initiatives.

The audit will also be used by HREOC to identify any gaps in programs or resources in order to inform future projects. In addition, the audit will be made public to provide a useful community resource.

## **2.2 Key stakeholder meetings**

The Race Discrimination Unit, HREOC, held over 100 meetings with key stakeholders from Muslim communities, police and others in NSW and Victoria. See Appendix 3 for a list of key stakeholders met. The purpose of these meetings was to identify the key issues and get input from key stakeholders on how best to proceed with the project, run consultations and plan forums. Key stakeholders were provided with information about the project and given an opportunity to provide HREOC with feedback on the project at meetings held respectively in Victoria on 26 April and in NSW on 27 April 2006.

## **2.3 Consultations with Muslim communities**

During June 2006 the Race Discrimination Unit held group consultations with members of the Muslim communities in NSW and Victoria, including separate consultations with Muslim women, Muslim youth, Muslims in regional areas and police. Approximately 96 people participated in these consultation/workshops in NSW (including Sydney and Cringila) and approximately 130 people participated in consultations/workshops in Victoria (Melbourne and Shepparton). Separate consultations were also held with police in Shepparton and Melbourne (in Sydney police were met with on an individual basis – see list of key stakeholders in Appendix 3). For a list of consultations, see Appendix 4.

The aims of the consultations were to:

- understand Muslim communities' needs relating to racial and religious hatred and abuse and law enforcement
- understand police policy and processes for responding to racial and religious hatred and abuse aimed at Muslims
- provide basic information about state and federal anti-discrimination laws and complaints processes relevant to racial and religious hatred and abuse
- establish content and priorities for the project's Forum

- commence an open and honest dialogue between police and Muslim community members who may have not had an opportunity to do so before.

The consultations with Muslim communities were more akin to workshops than formal consultations. Each consultation ran for approximately two hours. Food and drink were provided. The process for each consultation was as follows:

1. Most consultations were conducted by facilitators in conjunction with HREOC staff.
2. At the introduction of each consultation, the goals of the project were clearly stated by a HREOC representative. An emphasis was placed on looking for strategies to move forward and to improve police responses to discrimination.
3. Half of the consultation (approximately one hour) was devoted to 'café style' workshops in which the participants could discuss issues of concern to them. In order to facilitate discussion in these workshops a series of questions were put on each of the tables.
4. The questions posed in these café-style workshops were directed to three areas: the participants experience of discrimination and abuse; the police response to discrimination and abuse and strategies to progress the issues raised. HREOC also provided some role plays to break the ice.
5. The issues raised in these workshops were recorded on butcher-paper or noted by HREOC staff and the facilitators.
6. Half way through the consultation, and on the condition participants had given their permission, some police (often including MLOs, ECLOs or YLOs) joined the consultation. In some consultations police joined participants at their individual tables with their permission. The purpose of police involvement was to allow participants to ask police any questions they might have, as well as come up with possible future strategies together.
7. Finally the group reconvened and a representative of each of the tables presented their role plays and/or reported on the significant issues that their group had discussed.
8. In some consultations, entertainment was provided as an ice-breaker. For example in one youth consultation there was a short performance of hip hop music and in another a comedy duo.

HREOC also produced a short DVD from footage taken at three of the consultations in NSW, with participants' permission (See Appendix 5). The DVD gives a snapshot of some of the views raised by participants at these consultations. This was shown at the NSW Forum as a way of providing feedback from the consultations, and as a discussion-starter on the main issues raised.

Unlocking Doors aims primarily to address racial and religious hatred and abuse. This incorporates the types of racial and religious hatred or vilification as defined under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) (RDA) and the state anti-discrimination laws, as well as criminal acts of inciting racist violence under criminal laws.

During consultations it became clear that members of Muslim communities have little knowledge of the legal distinctions between vilification, discrimination and criminal acts. For them, the significant feature of such acts against Muslims is the prejudice itself – or the 'racism' – rather than whether the act constitutes a crime under the various laws. Hence during Unlocking Doors participants discussed a wide variety of racist incidents, both of a criminal and non-criminal nature.

## **2.4 Unlocking Doors forums**

Unlocking Doors forums were held in Melbourne on 7 September 2006 and in Sydney on 18 September 2006.

A key aim of the forums was to provide an opportunity for interactive and honest dialogue between Muslim communities and police in each state, focusing on racial and religious hatred and abuse.

The forums included

- an introduction by senior police representatives (in NSW, the Police Commissioner and in Victoria, the Operation Commander).
- a report back from consultations, including participants in the consultations and, in NSW, the screening of the DVD discussed in Section 2.3.
- opportunities for sharing knowledge and building relationships between participants
- basic information on federal and state anti-discrimination laws, discrimination, harassment and abuse
- information on police services

- workshops and open discussion
- the development of future strategies for addressing racial and religious hatred and abuse, including resources.

Over 100 people attended the forum in Victoria, and over 100 people attended the forum in NSW.

Forum Programs are included in Appendix 6.

Participants included representatives of HREOC, police, anti-discrimination agencies, community organisations, individual Muslim and non-Muslim community members (including a number of young people and women), academics and government service providers.

## **2.5 Police participation in the project**

NSW and Victoria Police were key participants in the Unlocking Doors project. They have:

- provided feedback to HREOC on project design and implementation
- participated in every forum conducted by HREOC
- participated in discussions about ways of addressing some of the issues identified through the consultations and the possible resources that HREOC might develop for this purpose.

Members of NSW and Victoria Police who were involved in key stakeholder meetings are included in Appendix 3. In addition, up to eight police officers from local commands and specialised sections of police attended each of the consultations with Muslim communities, as described above. Approximately 15-20 members of NSW and Victoria police, including police officers, YLOs, ECLOs and MLOs and Commanders, participated in each of the NSW and Victoria Forums.

However, in response to a draft of this report, NSW Police state that NSW Police did not contribute towards the formulation of the project aims and its focus on 'dialogue between Muslim communities and police in NSW'.

NSW Police point out that they have been building dialogue and partnerships with Muslim communities for many years. These include:

- providing a whole-of-government response to support Muslim communities in the aftermath of the Sept 11 and other critical incidents

- NSWPF executive involvement and dialogue particularly through the meetings of the Commissioner's Advisory Council on Culturally Responsive Policing (formerly known as the Police and Ethnic Communities' Advisory Council) as well as briefings to the NSW Government in relation to the Prime Minister's summit with Muslim leaders and the subsequent National Action Plan
- participation in external initiatives such as the Ismaε project by HREOC
- hundreds of projects and ongoing collaborations between local police and local Muslim communities as well as organisations with the active involvement of Ethnic Community Liaison Officers
- Customised IMPACT projects (see Appendix 2).

Victoria Police also points to its engagement with all of their communities, including those of Islamic background.

This includes ongoing, high level engagement where, for example, the Islamic Council of Victoria has representation on the Police and Community and Multicultural Advisory Committee, and the Victoria Multifaith Council.

At the community level, this includes active engagement with operational Victoria Police members, as well as Multicultural Liaison Officers and Youth Resource Officers.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission wishes to acknowledge the many initiatives undertaken by both NSW and Victoria Police to engage communities, including Muslim communities. The audit (Appendix 2) also describes the extensive range of activities where both Vic Police and NSW Police have actively sought dialogue and engagement with Muslim communities.

### **3. What were the main issues raised during consultations and forums, and the strategies to address these?**

#### ***3.1 Explanation of issues and strategies***

Participants at the Unlocking Doors consultations and forums raised a variety of issues about racial and religious discrimination and hatred, and police capacity to respond to these issues. These were a mixture of concerns directly related to the focus of the project; others were indirectly related, reflecting the complexity of issues, and the diversity of experiences of Muslim communities in NSW and Victoria. Also, many participants discussed more general issues to do with community attitudes to Muslims, rather than the police's capacity to respond to incidents.

During the consultations and forums, participants expressed a number of views and made allegations concerning racial and religious discrimination and hatred. HREOC did not require participants to verify these views and allegations. That was because Unlocking Doors was a consultation project, not a formal inquiry or investigation into police practices. As a result, the Report should be read with the understanding that the views expressed, and specific allegations in particular, have been unverified.

Of course, in identifying the main issues from the consultations, HREOC has given weight to those that were raised on several or many occasions by various members of the community throughout the consultations. While these remain unverified they are nevertheless part of a community perception. This perception can have a real effect on the relationship between police and the community. For this reason it is important that strategies continue to be developed that address the issues raised by the community and that existing strategies are evaluated to ensure community perceptions are addressed.

There was also discussion by both police and communities about some of the good initiatives and programs undertaken in local areas, for example the work done by local commanders and police officers to build relationships with young people or different ethnic communities. Despite some of the good work being done, at both the community and policy level, there were significant areas for improvement raised by both Muslim communities and police.

Participants in the consultations and forums also identified and developed solutions and strategies to address some of the issues raised. These ranged from identifying specific resources to broader strategies for action by police or Muslim communities. These strategies were often based on existing or past successful programs, both Muslim and non-Muslim specific. For example, the

use of community-based bilingual workers by Victoria Health was seen as a community-education model which could be utilised further by police.

This Report collects the main strategies suggested by the participants and presents them in relation to identified issues. A summary of these is provided at the end of the Report. Please note that there were many other ideas raised by participants in relation to other issues not discussed in this Report.

Please also note that the strategies do not reflect any stated agreement between HREOC, communities, police and other government agencies for future action. At this stage the listed strategies reflect suggestions made by participants during consultations and forums only. HREOC hopes that each of these can be examined for their respective merits and demerits in the future, together with NSW and Victoria Police and other key stakeholders.

### ***3.2 Addressing the diverse impact of racial and religious hatred on different Muslim communities***

Muslim participants at the consultations and forums reported widespread incidences of racial and religious prejudice and hatred. This supports the findings of Ismael, other research in the area<sup>2</sup> and anecdotal reports from anti-discrimination agencies and community organisations.

Participants at the Unlocking Doors consultations and forums reported that the extent and nature of such prejudice and hatred differed among different Muslim communities and within sections of those communities.

Muslim communities in Australia are diverse. This diversity includes not only varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds, but differences in religious adherence, socio-economic status, areas of residence, length of time in Australia, educational opportunities, generational and gender differences, among others.

The labelling of all Muslims as the same, not only by perpetrators of discrimination and abuse, but also by policy-makers, the media and government agencies, despite cultural and other differences between Muslims, was viewed negatively by some participants. They did not want to

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<sup>2</sup> Forrest, J and Dunn, K (2006), 'Racism and Intolerance in Eastern Australia: a geographic perspective', Australian Geographer, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 167\_186, July 2006; Australian Arabic Council (2001) 'Racial vilification against Arabic and Muslim Australians in light of the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States', unpublished, Australian Arabic Council Melbourne; Hage, G. (2003) Against Paranoid Nationalism, Pluto Press, Annandale; Islamic Council of New South Wales (2004), Challenges for Australian Muslims: Discrimination, Anti-Terrorism, and the Media, Islamic Council of New South Wales, Chullora; Poynting, S., Noble, G., Tabar, P. & Collins, J. (2004), Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other, Sydney Institute of Criminology Series, Sydney.

identify themselves primarily as Muslim, over and above or to the exclusion of their other identities. This was confusing and led to treatment that did not take into account their other attributes.

The diversity of Muslims means that the experiences of discrimination and abuse and their impact are also diverse and complex.

For example:

- The Afghani Muslim participants in Shepparton, Victoria reported experiencing little or no discrimination, had no knowledge of anti-discrimination laws and complaints processes and had little to no understanding of police roles and processes as they had only been in the country for a very short period of time and were still trying to negotiate their settlement in a new country. Access to employment has been the biggest challenge.
- The Albanian Muslim participants in regional Victoria, who had been in Australia for decades, did not have experiences of discrimination and believed that this was largely due to the fact that they were not readily identifiable as being Muslim and in most cases looked European. They did, however, feel frustrated that Muslims were being portrayed negatively.
- Newly-arrived African Muslim participants reported being discriminated against on the basis of race as well as religion. There is increasing tension within the African communities based on ethnic divisions as well as religious divisions within the one ethnicity, for example, Sudanese Christians and Sudanese Muslims. They also reported experiencing racial profiling more than other communities, particularly in Victoria, based on their skin colour. They also reported problems both in NSW and Victoria in dealing with police and other services for a range of reasons. The issues for these communities are complex.
- Turkish Muslim participants also reported experiences of discrimination; however, unless they are Muslim women wearing the hijab, they were not easily identifiable as being Muslim. Young Turkish Muslims especially felt affected by the prejudice and negative stereotyping of Muslims around them, targeted mostly at Arab populations. This has created animosity and resentment towards Arab Muslims.
- Arab Muslim participants reported feeling particularly vulnerable to experiences of racial and/or religious discrimination and abuse. This group seem to be affected most by global and local events.

The type of discrimination or abuse experienced by the participants also differs by gender and age:



- For most participants, discrimination in seeking employment was expressed as the most common area of discrimination as opposed to harassment and abuse. For young participants, especially male, solving discrimination in employment was seen as a more significant issue to address than abuse and harassment.
- All groups also reported experiencing forms of abuse and harassment in public areas. However, women in particular reported experiencing abuse, and discrimination, in public areas, for example on public transport, shops and shopping centres or while driving, especially if wearing the hijab. Sometimes this was of the more extreme level of verbal abuse or physical attack, so much so that they felt unsafe in public areas and were careful where they went and with whom.
- More specific to young people were experiences of discrimination and abuse in schools, in recreational areas and driving.
- A few participants said they had experienced discrimination by police and other young people said they had friends and family who had been discriminated against or abused by police. Young people of African background felt particularly targeted by police.
- For adult participants, there was a notable concern for the younger generation. Muslim women participants noted that whereas they may tolerate low level abuse and harassment, they were particularly worried about the impact of this type of abuse on their children.

Despite these differences, most participants reported feeling under attack and targeted as a result of anti-Muslim prejudice.

Some existing police initiatives cater for the needs of particular communities. For example, Victoria Police has an active role in working with Afghan communities, especially in the South Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Information exchange sessions have been conducted with Hazara community members, and advice has been provided to Afghan broadcasters seeking to engage with Victoria Police on community radio.

### **Strategies suggested by participants**

1. Programs or initiatives to address racial and religious hatred against Muslims need to cater for diversity, including cultural, linguistic, gender and generational differences between Muslims, rather than to target Muslims as a homogenous group.
2. A proactive education and information campaign for Muslim women on how to keep safe in public spaces and take action against racial and religious abuse.

### **3.3 Improving community knowledge of how to report an incident to police, HREOC and other agencies, and the benefits of reporting**

Although some participants in the consultations and forums had a basic idea of where to register a complaint if they were the victims of racial and religious hatred, many were unaware of the various avenues of complaints, such as police, state-based anti-discrimination commissions and HREOC. They were also unaware of how to go about making a complaint to these agencies.

In general the consultations indicated that:

- Most young people had a good idea as to where and how to seek help in the case of an incident at school, although did not always feel like that was useful as they felt that the incident could be ignored by the teacher or principal or the punishment was unfair.
- Women participants said they would most likely seek support from husband, friends or family and, like the newly arrived migrants and refugees, would have the least knowledge of what reporting mechanisms and avenues of complaints exist.
- The most common reaction to incidents by women and men participants was to do little. Many young people, however, felt that the best reaction was to take matters into their own hands, either by confronting the perpetrator themselves or getting assistance from friends or family, even if it might get them into trouble with police or authorities. They felt they would get no positive outcome from complaining to government agencies.

In terms of police complaints, a few participants knew to go to police when a crime had been committed, and had received good results.

For example, one woman in Victoria told of how her husband had been assaulted on the train but did not know the perpetrators. He went to the police and they put up posters around the station. Eventually, someone gave evidence about one of the perpetrators and he was arrested.

However, some were also unaware of what was or was not a crime.

I didn't know that pulling off my hijab in that way was an assault! (young woman, Auburn, NSW)

Others had little knowledge of the role of police in dealing with race-based crime and police processes. This may not be surprising considering the majority of the participants reported having little direct contact with police. Most young people's experiences with the police took place because they were assisting their parents in enquiries about car accidents, theft, etc. Some

had direct experiences with police in reporting incidents unrelated to racial or religious hatred, although a few had experiences of reporting racially and/or religiously motivated incidents.

There was an obvious lack of understanding and knowledge of police roles and procedures at an operational and policy level. For example, many people could not distinguish the court system from the police, did not know the main difference between the role of state and federal police especially in relation to anti-terrorism laws and raids, and some did not know the main differences between the uniforms, and the various uniforms of police, fire brigade and the sheriff's officers. Most people also lacked an understanding of their basic rights as victims or offenders such as in the use of stop and search powers. Nor were they aware of how to make a complaint about a police officer.

There was confusion as to when an incident was the responsibility of the police or not, not only in relation to racial hatred but also with respect to other incidents. For example, one participant reported an instance when they went to the police with an insurance-related matter, mistakenly expecting police to solve it. Other examples showed that people did not understand that police have a limited role when there is insufficient evidence to charge someone or that all incidents reported to police are recorded.

In relation to racially motivated incidents, there was a misconception that police could deal with general discrimination matters. On the other hand, there were also other misconceptions that police could **not** deal with certain issues. For example, some participants thought that violence in schools was the responsibility of schools only, and were interested to learn that police may have a role in working with schools to prevent racial and religious attacks on students.

Most participants were unaware of the role of the HREOC prior to participating in Unlocking Doors, and of what a complaint to HREOC may involve. There was slightly greater awareness of the state-based anti-discrimination agencies.

In addition to a lack of knowledge of how to make a complaint, some participants exhibited little understanding of the benefits of making a complaint of racial and religious hatred. For example, many participants had not thought that a perpetrator of verbal abuse may have targeted other individuals in a particular public area and that a police presence or police apprehension may prevent a serial abuser from abusing someone else.

However, other participants made comments which showed an understanding, and an expectation, of a police role in promoting community safety and crime prevention. For example, women who felt unsafe in public areas asked whether there could be a greater police presence in certain areas.

To a certain extent the lack of knowledge among communities of the role of anti-discrimination agencies and police applies across the general populations of Victoria and NSW. However, the consultations indicate that some of these issues may be more relevant to Muslim communities as a result of recent international and local incidents as well as heightened media focus.

### **Strategies suggested by participants**

3. Community education on
  - the role and procedures of police in NSW and Victoria, including their role in community safety, particularly for women and youth
  - the benefits of reporting racial or religious hatred crime, including any successful outcomes of reported race-related incidents
  - the role of HREOC, the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (ADB) and the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria (EOCV), and how and when to make a complaint of racial and religious discrimination or hatred to these agencies.
4. Community education should be delivered through formal and informal means, depending on the particular group targeted. For some groups, community education should be delivered through bilingual workers who have been trained by police, HREOC and ADB/EOCV to educate their community on racial and religious discrimination, hatred and abuse. This form of delivery is more effective for newly arrived Muslim communities. Trainers must be suitably skilled to deliver culturally appropriate training.
5. Materials developed for community education should be culturally, linguistically and religiously sensitive and appropriate.

### ***3.4 Improving police understanding of the serious impact of racial hatred and where to refer victims when it is not a crime***

While some police who participated in consultations and the forums said they had a basic knowledge and understanding of state anti-discrimination agencies, they acknowledged that many officers had a limited understanding of HREOC and the type of cases which could be referred to it or other such bodies.

Without a comprehensive survey of all police officers, it is difficult to determine the extent of this knowledge throughout the police, as only a limited number of

officers participated in the consultations and Forums. Nonetheless, building greater awareness among police in relation to discrimination and vilification was identified by Muslim communities and police themselves as important.

Many participants felt that complaints of racial and religious discrimination or hatred would not be taken seriously by police, due to either their own experiences or the experiences of others. While all police participants at the consultations exhibited an understanding of the impact of such racial hatred on victims, the reports by consultation participants did not reflect this, perhaps because police officers involved in the consultations already had an interest and understanding of the impact of race-based crime.

During consultations, police officers explained that there were systems in place for recording race-based crime. In Victoria, the Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP), a database for recording crime, has provisions for recording prejudice-related incidents. In NSW, the Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS) system allows for a recording of prejudice-related crime, including race-related incidents. Such recording in both states is not mandatory for police officers.

However, in both states police officers said they had only used the system for race-related crime on a few occasions, if ever. Both Victoria Police and NSW Police officers reported that they received very few complaints of racially and religiously motivated crime.

The LEAPS and COPS recording systems are distinct from any systems for making referrals to related agencies. There are no standard referral systems or procedures for police referral of race-related incidents in NSW or Victoria.<sup>3</sup> However, some police did make reference to referrals to agencies such as HREOC in role plays during consultations.

NSW Police point out that any review of COPS is generally conducted for high priority matters. COPS is a very complex system and any COPS review is costly. The current COPS screens designed to capture data on hate crime were launched in 1999 after significant research and trials.

### **Strategies suggested by participants**

6. Dissemination of information resources to all officers in NSW and Victoria police about the role of HREOC, ADB and EOCV in protecting against racial and religious discrimination and vilification. Resources are most effective if they are contextually relevant to policing in NSW and Victoria, and officers are trained in their meaning and use.

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<sup>3</sup> However, in 2006, EOCV and Victoria Police entered into a Memorandum of Understanding outlining a process of referring complaints of racially-motivated crime between EOCV and police.

7. A review of the LEAP (VIC) and COPS (NSW) systems of recording racial and religious hatred, with the aim of improving its effectiveness, including the need for police training in identifying racial hatred.
8. An articulated system for referring victims of racial and religious discrimination, hatred and abuse from police to EOCV and ADB or HREOC, and vice versa.
9. Police training (both entry-level and ongoing) on the serious impact of racial and religious hatred and abuse on community safety and effective policing, and avenues for referral of victims when not a crime.

### ***3.5 Increasing trust and confidence in police and police processes***

As mentioned above, many participants from Muslim communities reported that they would do nothing if an incident of racial or religious hatred occurred.

Both Victoria Police and the NSW Police involved in the consultations and forums stated that few incidents were reported to them. As a result they felt that discrimination against Muslims was not a major issue. Such under-reporting makes it difficult for police to monitor trends or plan based on those trends. Some police, although supportive of the project, expressed concern at the validity and feasibility of the project if communities were hesitant in reporting incidents to authorities.

Police in most jurisdictions devise communication strategies and community education initiatives for specific population groups to assist with breaking down barriers, lack of trust and understanding of police roles and responsibilities. However, despite this, underreporting continues to be raised as an issue.

There are various reasons for this lack of reporting. As mentioned already, there may be a widespread lack of knowledge of how to report incidents to police, HREOC or other state agencies. Further, a person may make an assessment that there is little that can be done (this will be discussed in Section 3.6).

However, many participants in the consultations also raised repeatedly their reluctance to go to the police despite their understanding that the police might be the relevant authority. This reluctance can be categorised generally as a lack of trust and confidence in the police and police processes.

It is important to note that some people said that they trusted the police and thought that there was not a problem of lack of trust between the police and community. Others acknowledged the good initiatives being undertaken by police to engage with communities, including youth camps and other

recreational activities. This was particularly noted in Melbourne and Shepparton.

However, a significant number of comments by participants indicated an entrenched lack of confidence and trust in police. This was more pronounced in Sydney forums. Young people had a greater understanding of police than many adults; however, they were more suspicious of police. As a result they would more than likely choose not to go to police and opt rather to do nothing about it or take matters into their own hands

This lack of trust and confidence in the police and police processes by some participants can be broken down into the following, sometimes overlapping, dimensions discussed below.

### **3.5.1 Improving police responses to reports of racial/religious incidents**

The most common perception about police when reporting incidents was that the police would not believe them when they complain or make a report of racial or religious hatred and would not take them seriously. Advocates and service providers were believed to be taken more seriously by police than victims.

I had an incident in the car. The police never chased it up and police did not take it seriously...they took a statement and never followed it up (youth, Shepparton, VIC)

I was crossing at lights and four guys in a ute pressing the accelerator and revving the car to scare me. Spoke to police and the police didn't get back to me (woman, Bankstown, NSW)

This is related to the perception that police treat the Muslim communities differently to other communities.

It is also related to how participants view the role of police in policing racist crime more generally. Although some participants in NSW said that they had more confidence in police following the police handling of the Cronulla incident, police and government leadership were highly criticised for public comments, especially in NSW. People felt that there was no clear commitment shown by Commissioners and other police leaders to identifying and confronting discrimination, believing that the line between police and politics was blurred. This made it difficult for communities to trust local police. Some people, including police themselves, believed that beat police are usually young and have minimal experience working with communities.

Some participants stated that they thought that police lacked professionalism in their dealing with the Muslim communities and expressed a need for their complaint and them as individuals to be treated fairly, respectfully and seriously.

In response to this complaint, police participants emphasised that police have a responsibility to investigate all reports seriously, and that the community should expect to be taken seriously. They also pointed out that sometimes people misunderstand police processes. For example, one officer pointed out that usually an officer is solely responsible for investigating an incident and if they have a day off duty for some reason, they may not have returned a call to a victim that day. This may be misconstrued by people as not taking the complaint seriously. Further, police officers have competing demands, often between very urgent and serious issues.

Some officers also suggested that victims should take the details of the police officer if they are unhappy with a response, and raise it with the Duty Officer or, failing that, with the Commander. Participants in the consultations found this information to be useful. There was a suggestion that community members needed to be more aware of how to make a complaint about police.

The NSW Police Professional Standards Command has been working on the development of community educational resources, including multilingual, in relation to making complaints about police, which are expected to be finalised and implemented in 2007.

### **Strategies suggested by participants**

10. Police training to emphasise the importance of responding sympathetically to a complaint of racial and religious hatred, as part of a professional approach to policing.
11. Community education, including fact-sheets or brochures in community languages, about how and when to make a complaint about instances of police in-action or poor service.

### **3.5.2 Addressing perceptions of police as ‘racist’**

Some participants in consultations in Victoria and NSW commented that they thought that they would be treated differently by police because of their race or religion, and hence that police were ‘racist’. This perception seems to be based on a combination of reasons, differing by individual:

- Personal experiences and contact with police
- Reports from friends and family about police experiences
- Misinformation about police, often through media reports
- Negative comments about Muslim communities made by politicians, police and other leaders which are equated with the attitude of those in authority such as police



- Their understanding of police policy, such as the Middle Eastern Organised Crime Squad and police and media use of ethnic descriptors in NSW, and the government's anti-terror laws.

This perception was strongest among young people, especially Arab Muslim youth in Sydney and newly arrived African youth in Melbourne.

Some young people voiced particular frustration at being told to move on by police without understanding why. They would often attribute this to being of African or of Arab background. For example, African young men feel they have been targets of racial profiling by police. A few allegations of police brutality against young African men have been investigated in Sydney and Melbourne. Incidents of police discrimination or abuse are quickly known throughout Muslim communities, creating a perception that all police are racially discriminatory and abusive.

Even though we don't do anything wrong, we feel targeted. The approach of police is to target us. Police need to relax and not think everyone is a problem (youth, Auburn, NSW)

It's the day to day stuff that makes you lose confidence. The grey areas where you don't know if you are being discriminated against or not – getting searched and stopped, having your pockets emptied (young man, Auburn, NSW)

Many participants also perceived certain policy initiatives and comments by government and police leadership as a reflection of racist attitudes of police. In NSW, some young participants raised concerns about the use of ethnic descriptors by police as an example of the racism of police. The establishment of the Middle Eastern Organised Crime Squad has further alienated young people from police. Young people indicated that they did not understand the reason and motive for its establishment, questioning the use of 'Middle Eastern' in the name. They therefore conclude that it is a measure targeted particularly at young Arab Muslims.

In Victoria the issues of mistrust centred more at a local level, although comments by federal political leaders have had an affect on how young people view the actions of others in authority, such as police.

Despite the perception by some young people that police in general are racist, others expressed trust in YLOs, MLOs and ECLOs that they had been in contact with. In general, YLOs, ECLOs and MLOs are seen as playing a role in bridging the gap between young people and police.

However, some participants in the consultations and forums warned of the limitations of these roles. For example, ECLOs and MLOs may do a good job, but young people may be more likely to come into contact with other police officers, who are often not involved in the community-police initiatives conducted by ECLOs and MLOs. Further, YLOs may have better liaison skills with young people, but, as one participant in NSW said, they are still seen as

police officers by marginalised young people. He suggested that certain young people themselves should be trained to be a contact for youth to police.

Some adult participants, both men and women, also expressed the opinion that police racism occurs, and that they are being treated differently from other people in the community. Some women expressed the view that police treated Muslims differently based on what their children had told them of their own experiences. Some women in Victoria accredited anti-terror laws and recent raids as evidence that they were being targeted as Muslims in some way by police. Most people felt that police needed to be better informed and educated about Muslims and Islam in Australia.

The perception that police officers and the police service in general, are racist has a direct impact on whether or not they would choose to go to the police to make a complaint.

My view is that many police are racist. Young people are targeted because of their race ... I don't think they are the type of people I would approach (young woman, Belmore, NSW)

On the other hand, police at the consultations, while acknowledging that some people may have negative experiences with individual police officers, pointed out single incidents of racism should not be seen to represent the entire police force in NSW and Victoria. Further, racism is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed on a regular and proactive basis in every society that is culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse, not only police.

Police reported that they too experience racial discrimination and abuse, directed at them from community members, including people from Muslim communities. They pointed out that the community lacked understanding of the issues that police face and the daily life of a police officer and vice versa. Some police also felt that they would often bear the brunt of criticism that should be directed to media or government. Some police also felt that sometimes victims and offenders allege racist behaviour to get what they want.

Hence, participants felt that negative stereotypes were being perpetrated on both sides based on single incidents or media representation.

The recruitment of Muslim police officers was seen as one way to increase trust in police and to decrease the perception that Muslims are being targeted. Police at the consultations and forums pointed out the efforts of NSW police and Victoria police to recruit an ethnically diverse workforce. For example, in Bankstown Local Area Command, there are 14 Muslim officers. Muslims can also be recruited in other roles than as police officers. For example, Campsie and Bankstown Local Area Commands have Volunteers in Policing (VIPs) who are Muslim. More generally, NSW Police have informed HREOC of a newly initiated comprehensive strategy on the recruitment and retention of police from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. HREOC have not evaluated this strategy.

Participants also suggested that another way to improve the perception of police racism is to improve police training. NSW and Victoria Police point out that they already have a range of training initiatives to ensure that officers are culturally competent.

For example, NSW Police has

- developed guidelines on cultural diversity training for police which reflect innovative and quality industry standards
- A Cultural Diversity Team which conducts interactive diversity training for police founded on the 'Diversity Framework', tailored to the needs of the specific police involved
- community orientation programs in local area commands for police new to the area. In addition, ECLOs regularly participate in LAC training days to ensure police awareness of local communities

Victoria Police also point out that cultural competency training is delivered to all Victoria Police Recruits and Probationary Constables. Individual regions of the Victoria Police also maintain active relationships with a range of culturally and religious based organisations. This enables them to periodically obtain cultural competency training on a number of issues. This is reflected, for example, in the relationship between the Newport Mosque in the Western Suburbs of Melbourne and local Police. A similar scenario is also apparent with a range of schools in the Broadmeadows area, in the Northern suburbs of Melbourne, and local Police.

However, participants felt that while some police officers and particular commands demonstrated cultural competency, this was not consistent. Also, they felt that there was a need for understanding of issues affecting Muslim communities in particular, including the impact of racism on relations with police.

Specific policies on anti-racism were also suggested as a means of building community confidence in police. In NSW the development of an anti-racism policy has already been flagged by NSW Police Equity and Strategy Command.

Participants also suggested that building stronger relationships between communities and police was a key means of breaking down stereotypes on both sides and encouraging understanding and respect.

Over the past few years NSW and Victoria Police have undertaken a number of community activities which are outlined in the audit, for this purpose. Some of these initiatives were highlighted at the consultations and Forums. For example

- All NSW Local Area Commands have a variety of ways in which they engage local communities on policing and crime issues. Recently,

NSW Police announced the School Liaison Officer program to facilitate closer partnerships between schools and Local Area Commands.

- ECLOs often work in partnership with local police on strategies and initiatives deemed appropriate for joint participation by community stakeholders.
- Police and Community Accountability Teams (PACTs) as well as a range of other interagency committees with police participation exist at local levels where policing and crime issues are discussed and addressed.

These initiatives were seen as successful models which should be supported, promoted and furthered in other areas.

### **Strategies suggested by participants**

12. More comprehensive and compulsory cultural competency training for police at the entry level as well as ongoing training for different levels of officers in relevant local areas, specifically

- knowledge and understanding of diverse Muslim communities (especially in local area), Islam and issues of concern facing Muslim communities, delivered in an interactive way
- human rights training, including the principle of non-discrimination, cultural rights and the practical application of these in operational policing
- creative ways of conducting training so that it is relevant to police officers, for example exchanges between police officers at different locations who report back on their experiences.

13. Increased dialogue and relationship-building between police and Muslim communities, including

- on-the-job training for police in community organisations as part of formal training
- short forums and workshops for open discussion between police and community members on particular topics
- more one-off and regular social activities to bring police and Muslim communities on an informal basis, learning from a number of successful events held by police commands locally
- continued engagement of YLOs, ECLOs and MLOs with diverse Muslim communities, and a requirement that regular police be included in these activities

- formal and informal activities bringing youth and police together through PCYCs (see Glossary), schools and other youth networks
  - regular police feedback to the communities in an informal manner about the incidence and nature of crime in the local area
  - regular police visits to schools where young people can ask police questions and learn about the law, the police role and their rights
  - contact between police and communities should involve not only ECLOs, MLOs and YLOs but a range of police in different roles
  - police and community committees at a local and regional level, not just state-wide or national.
14. Community education, for young people in particular, on how to make a complaint about police discrimination or abuse
15. Information for communities and for police demonstrating that racism by police officers is not tolerated by police
16. Community education on the anti-terror laws, the rights of the individual, the role of state and federal police in anti-terror operations, delivered in small workshops and informal settings
17. Review of the use of ethnic descriptors and the name Middle-Eastern Organised Crime Squad by police in NSW, specifically how to address concerns that these contribute to a negative image of police among Muslim communities
18. Examination of the need for comprehensive policy initiatives such as
- specific anti-racism policies throughout police
  - a specialist taskforce or unit to deal with racist incidents which can have a number of roles including trend identification, information point for referral of incidents, a Hotline for victims.
19. Continued commitment by police in NSW and Victoria to recruit a culturally diverse police workforce, in a variety of police roles, so that police can better reflect the diversity of the community they serve.
20. Research to measure police attitudes to Muslims, showing differences by police role, local area, training background etc.
21. Research on Muslim community attitudes and expectations of police with reference to religion, ethnicity, locality, age, gender.

### **3.5.3 Decreasing fear of police within communities**

A number of participants at the consultations and at the forums spoke about a fear of authority, especially police, among newly arrived African communities. For some new arrivals, police in their country of origin may be consistent violators of human rights, acting with impunity.

As a result, some Muslim communities are fearful of police in general and do not yet sufficiently understand the role of police in Australia. This has led to some serious incidents of miscommunication between police and some newly arrived refugees, which may only further entrench misunderstanding and lack of trust between the two groups without adequate education on both sides. For example, such refugees may have a fear of fingerprinting or alcohol breath-testing.

Police in countries of origin may also have very different roles and procedures than police in Australia. For example, the police in some countries are highly centralised and the existence of bureaucratic divisions in Australian police are unfamiliar to these refugees and migrants as a result. While this may not necessarily lead to mistrust of police, there may be widespread misunderstandings about the role of police. A survey conducted by Holroyd Local Area Command and Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre in NSW, highlights the lack of understanding of the law and the role of police by emerging communities in the area.<sup>4</sup>

Some women and men also said they were fearful of their permanent visa or even citizenship being revoked if they lodged a complaint with police.

Participants saw community education and local community initiatives as important in breaking down barriers between police and newly arrived communities. Police in NSW and Victoria have been involved in some initiatives to help address some of the concerns of newly arrived communities, both independently and in partnership with other agencies.

#### **Strategies suggested by participants**

22. Ongoing cultural training of police at a local level about current and emerging communities in the locality and the possible impact on policing.
23. Community education for newly arrived migrants and refugees on the role of police and facilitated contact with police in unthreatening environments.

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<sup>4</sup> Holroyd LAC and Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC (2006), Paving the Way – Strengthening Relationships between NSW Police and Emerging Communities, NSW.

### 3.5.4 Improving perceptions of police as ineffective or inefficient

Participants felt generally that the response to complaints/reports by police is inadequate and that the response rate and follow up is too slow or non-existent. “They never called me back or came” were commonly heard complaints. People were often frustrated by the lack of information given to the victim about the process of investigating a complaint.

I didn't go to police because I felt that they will not take any action (due to previous experience of a friend's where no action was taken) (woman, Bankstown, NSW)

My neighbour gets drunk and plays loud music when we are at prayer time. I asked the woman to turn it down but she didn't and abused me instead. I rang the police but they never came (woman, Shepparton, VIC)

This complaint is in relation to all incidents which need to be reported to police, not just the few which were related to racially or religiously- motivated incidents.

Overall, the community felt an increasing need for police to develop a more service-oriented approach to helping communities, and to improve their communication and interpersonal skills.

In addition, participants have the perception that police are ineffective and hence it is not worth making a complaint. For example, some people expressed their view that police cannot help them unless they have been unable to fully identify the perpetrator.

Police acknowledged that it is difficult to investigate incidents of harassment and abuse if the perpetrator cannot be identified. However, some police involved in the consultations also pointed out that police officers are experienced in assembling evidence, for example through public CCTV cameras. They also pointed out that the reporting of one incident may be important to build evidence about a pattern of behaviour by a perpetrator. The police encouraged victims to report incidents even if they are unsure how much evidence they can provide.

Some participants gave some examples of a positive experience with police when they reported a racially-motivated crime.

I was discriminated against at a country club. The security guards gave me a hard time but the police came and took the security guard aside and told him off (man, Shepparton, VIC)

One girl said she was assaulted by two young men, who ripped off her hijab. She didn't know them but her friend encouraged her to go to the police where she got 'good treatment' (woman, Liverpool, NSW).

## **Strategies suggested by participants**

24. Promotional campaign on the successful outcomes of complaints of race-based crime, and how to assist the police in effective reporting of crime to police
25. Information for communities on how to follow up on a report to police, standard police procedure following a reported crime and how to make a complaint of police inaction or inefficiency if necessary

### **3.6 *Improving legal remedies for incidents which are neither crimes nor acts of discrimination or vilification under anti-discrimination law***

Some participants in the consultations and forums felt that there were limited legal remedies available to them for certain types of racism and abuse.

Many incidents of racial or religious prejudice described by participants were relatively minor incidents, neither violent nor extremely abusive. For various reasons, it is unlikely that these acts would constitute a crime. Muslim participants and police pointed out that it would be a waste of time to go to the police for such acts.

Even if some of these incidents are not crimes, they may be unlawful under the RDA or state anti-discrimination laws. For example, several participants spoke about abusive comments at work. These might form the basis for a claim of discrimination or harassment under these anti-discrimination laws.

However, for some of the incidents discussed by participants at the consultations and forums there may be no legal remedy at all because they do not meet the threshold for a crime or an act of vilification.

For example, the law is limited in the case of religious vilification. Whereas racially offensive or abusive behaviour in public is prohibited by the federal *Racial Hatred Act 1995* (Cth), religious hatred is not unlawful under federal legislation.<sup>5</sup> In Victoria this gap is covered by the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* (Vic), which makes unlawful religious vilification as well as racial vilification. The law also makes 'serious' racial and religious vilification a criminal offence under Victorian law. However, in NSW vilification on the ground of religion is not unlawful, meaning that there is no remedy for religious vilification for NSW victims.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Racial Hatred Act* amends the RDA so to make it against the law to be racially offensive or abusive in public.



In terms of discrimination, there is also inconsistency between the federal and state laws. Discrimination on the basis of religion is unlawful under Victorian law. In NSW, although discrimination on the ground of ethno-religious origin is unlawful, in order for someone to establish discrimination on this ground, they cannot rely solely on their religion, Islam. Under federal law, discrimination on the ground of religion is not unlawful, although HREOC can investigate and attempt to conciliate a complaint of discrimination in employment on the ground of religion.

Therefore, there is a lack of legal remedy in the federal law and in NSW for discrimination or vilification on the ground of religion. These issues were discussed in the Ismaç Report, which recommended that a federal law be introduced making discrimination and vilification on the ground of religion or belief unlawful.<sup>6</sup> Some participants in the Unlocking Doors forum felt that laws should be amended in this way, in particular because they had been abused specifically because of their faith rather than ethnicity.

Further, some participants pointed out that in some cases the incidents will not meet the threshold for a legal remedy, either criminal or under anti-discrimination law. For example, the abuse may be too trivial in impact to meet the threshold for vilification.

Participants also acknowledged that making a complaint to the police or HREOC or the ADB/EOCV may not always be the most effective or appropriate response to an incident. As discussed above, there are many reasons why an individual may decide not to complain about an incident, either to the police or more generally. While some of these reasons may be based on misinformation or are made without adequate information about making a complaint, it may be reasonable to decide that making a complaint would be ineffective and useless in some cases.

Participants made many alternative suggestions of how to deal with particular incidents before seeking a legal remedy, or as an alternative to a legal remedy, depending on the circumstance. For example, in the case of school bullying, to raise it with a school counsellor or school principal.

Participants acknowledged that the remedy had to fit the incident, and a person needed to respond in the most effective way for that particular case. However, it was seen as important to have a range of options available.

### **Strategies suggested by participants**

26. Lobbying federal and state governments to amend anti-discrimination laws so that there is national consistency in protection against discrimination and vilification on the ground of religion

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<sup>6</sup> Ismaç Report, p6

27. Police training on the differences between HREOC, ADB/EOCV so that victims of racial and religious discrimination or hatred can be referred appropriately.
28. Development of a resource for community organisations and community members presenting a range of alternatives for responding to various types of racial and religious hatred and abuse.

## 4. Evaluation of project against the aims

The overall aim of Unlocking Doors was to open up doors to dialogue between police and Muslim communities, in order to assist police respond effectively to incidents of racial and religious hatred.

Unlocking Doors aimed to achieve this by bringing together police officers, diverse Muslim community members and others in consultations and forums to discuss the impact of discrimination and abuse and develop strategies to address this.

In general, the project met the more detailed aims as follows:

### 1. **Work with, and develop resources for, law enforcement agencies to better enable them to assist victims of racial or religious hatred and abuse**

The development of resources has been discussed throughout the project.

- Key Stakeholders made suggestions as to the content, format and dissemination of resources both for police and community. They also identified existing resources and initiatives. These ideas were incorporated into planning for resources.
- Participants in consultations and forums – including a range of police officers and ECLOs/MLOs - made a number of suggestions for specific resources to assist police respond to victims of racial or religious hatred or abuse. They also suggested resources for communities. Some of these are presented in Section 3.
- HREOC created a shortlist of suggested resources which address the main Unlocking Doors issues, for discussion with police.
- HREOC met with the Multicultural Advisory Unit and others in Victoria Police and the Cultural Diversity Team in NSW Police to identify the most useful resource, for development both in the short term and long term.

As a result of discussions with NSW and Victoria Police, HREOC are in the final stages of drafting a succinct information resource for police which

- clarifies the distinction between racial and religious discrimination, vilification and crime
- emphasises the serious impact of racial hatred and abuse

- identifies the various legal remedies – specific to NSW and Victoria - for referral of victims.

While the resource is yet to be completed in a form ready for dissemination, this is expected to be completed in early 2007. HREOC and police in Victoria and NSW are in the process of discussing the most suitable format for dissemination throughout the police.

This resource can also function as a basic first stage resource for future information campaigns with police and community.

**2. Strengthen Muslim communities' relationship with law enforcement agencies, and inform community members of the legal avenues and services available to them as victims of racial and / or religious hatred and abuse including state and federal anti-discrimination laws and complaints processes and police processes**

HREOC aimed to strengthen the relationship between Muslim communities and police during the various stages of Unlocking Doors, as follows:

- Key Stakeholders in early meetings provided advice to HREOC about the key issues facing Muslim communities with regard to racial and religious hatred and abuse, and the role of police. A number of key stakeholders stressed that it was important to bring police and community together. However, they also emphasised that some people, especially marginalised young people, would not feel comfortable entering into a dialogue with police initially.
- In recognition of the above issue, HREOC organised the consultations for Muslim communities separately from police. However, at the second half of each consultation permission was sought from participants to include a few police officers from local commands to answer questions and begin the process of dialogue. The feedback from this process was in general positive, with many participants reporting back that they appreciated the opportunity to discuss issues with beat police and learn more about the role and procedures of police. Some police said that they were already aware of the issues being raised; others said they had learnt a lot about the perceptions of members of Muslim communities towards police.
- At Unlocking Doors forums, police and Muslim communities had the opportunity to discuss openly their relationship. The forums were attended by a cross-section of police, including higher levels of command, ECLOs and MLOs and constables from local commands. Representatives from Muslim community organisations, mainstream service providers, individual women, men and youth from Muslim

communities all participated in forum workshops and open plenary sessions. The mix of individuals and community leaders and service providers was a positive ingredient in the forum, as previously key stakeholders had raised concerns that relationship-building with police and government as a whole usually extended to Muslim 'community leaders' only. This is especially relevant because of the diverse nature of Muslim communities, and the difficulties in identifying relevant leadership.

- The Unlocking Doors forums also gave police and communities the opportunity to highlight some of the positive initiatives which were taking place to build relationships between police and Muslim communities.

While the consultations and forums were a limited means of establishing, or in some cases furthering, a dialogue between police and Muslim communities, it was a valuable step in recognising each others perspectives and discussing common points for moving forward.

The consultations and forums also were a means of informing Muslim communities about the legal avenues and services available to them as victims of racial and/or religious hatred and abuse, and informing police about the possibility of referring victims to HREOC or ADB/EOCV. This was a key feature of the consultations. At each consultation there was a brief introduction to anti-discrimination complaints processes. Police at consultations responded to questions about their processes and role. At the forums, there were specific workshops on human rights and the complaints processes under HREOC and ADB/EOCV. Police officers also gave workshops to women and informed them of how to keep safe when racially abused or harassed in a public place, including contacting police. Materials on the RDA and ADB/EOCV were available.

**3. Identify any particular issues for diverse Muslim groups such as Muslims in regional areas, youth and women, in order to ensure that police take their needs into account when responding to claims of racial and religious hatred and abuse**

HREOC conducted specific Unlocking Doors consultations for Muslims in regional areas, women and youth in order to identify whether there were any particular issues for each of these groups (see Appendix 4). These issues are reflected in this report.

Based on the needs identified in these consultations, HREOC also decided to conduct specific workshops for women and youth at each forum. These workshops focused on strategies to address racial and religious hatred experienced by women and youth in particular, especially with regard to their relationship with police.

One key issue to emerge from the Unlocking Doors consultations was whether projects such as Unlocking Doors and broader programs and initiatives should bring together diverse groups within Muslim communities under the title of 'Muslim'. As discussed, cultural, generational and gender differences may be more relevant to the experiences of individuals than whether they are Muslim per se. This is especially so in regards to youth, who experience discrimination and abuse differently from their parents based not only on their faith but their age. Muslims from particular ethnic backgrounds as well told HREOC that they found it strange to have to identify as Muslim first and foremost and found themselves being equated with other ethnic groups with quite different experiences to their own. While all groups experience discrimination as Muslims, it is not always on that basis alone. As a result, strategies to deal with this discrimination and abuse may need to differ. Programs and projects may better meet these needs if they focus on specific groups and the multiplicity of identities of individuals rather than Muslims as a whole.

Further, some people felt that although there may be a need to combat prejudice against Muslims with specific initiatives, the labelling of such initiatives as 'Muslim' further perpetuated the stereotype that Muslims were all the same and were a homogenous force to be targeted, even if that was intended to benefit Muslims.

#### **4. Assist in the development of strategies that will better enable law enforcement agencies to deal with acts of racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslim people**

Consultations and forums specifically asked participants for solutions and strategies to address incidents of racial and religious hatred and abuse and the capacity of police to respond to these incidents. A list of the key strategies developed by participants at the consultations and forums is provided in the conclusion below. This report will be made available to police, key stakeholders and on the HREOC website.

The strategies developed through Unlocking Doors, especially the development of practical resources, will be the basis of ongoing discussions between HREOC and NSW and Victoria police, and furthered through ongoing HREOC projects in collaboration with police and communities.

There has been a genuine recognition during consultations and forums that any building of a relationship of trust and understanding between community and police is a long-term process and could not happen overnight. While one-off activities at a local level are important and many are successful, the relationships with community are often based on the personality or commitment of individual officers and the command. Systemically, relationships will not develop unless the value of police and community

relationships is recognised throughout police and community and is supported by policy and program structures.

**5. Improve the extent to which acts of racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslim people are being monitored and responded to by police**

One of the key issues raised in the Unlocking Doors consultations and forums was the anomaly between the anecdotal reports by Muslims of racial and religious abuse and violence and the infrequent reporting of these complaints of racial and religious hatred and abuse to police, and HREOC and ADB/EOCV.

This raises issues of whether the true extent of such incidents is being monitored successfully. While NSW and Victoria police who attended the consultations and forums have a raised awareness of the importance of monitoring incidents, it is too early to determine whether this will lead to a review of monitoring systems as suggested by participants (see Section 3.3).

More generally, it is hoped that some of the strategies suggested by participants for improving the response of police to incidents of racial and religious hatred and abuse will be considered further and adopted by Victoria and NSW police. HREOC plans to further some of these suggestions together with police and community in the future.

## **5. Budget**

As discussed above, the development of resources for police are yet to be finalised. As such, the funding provided by DIMA for the Unlocking Doors project has yet to be fully acquitted. It is anticipated that this will occur on completion of the resources early in 2007.



## 6. Conclusion

The Unlocking Doors project provided an opportunity for Muslim communities and police in NSW and Victoria to discuss racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslims and the role of police in addressing this. It has:

- identified some of the main issues relating to the capacity of police and communities to respond to racism suffered by Muslims in NSW and Victoria
- identified a range of strategies to address these issues
- commenced a process of dialogue and relationship building between Muslim communities and police.

While Unlocking Doors met its goals within the limits of the project, its value has been in identifying the direction for long term strategies. In particular, although building a dialogue between Muslim communities and police was a central aim for the project, it is evident that the consultations and forums are but a small step in that direction. To have effective dialogue, there is a need to build strong relationships and understandings between police and Muslim communities, and this requires a long term commitment and direction from police.

However, Unlocking Doors may be a useful starting point for initiatives in other states, building on the lessons learned from Unlocking Doors in NSW and Victoria. In particular, it provides essential strategic direction for ongoing work by HREOC to address the needs of Muslims communities experiencing discrimination, hatred and abuse. HREOC will build on these strategies and the information presented in the audit in its future work.

HREOC has received four year funding through the federal government's National Action Plan to address discrimination against Muslims in Australia through human rights and responsibilities education. Using human rights education the project will help build social cohesion and counteract extreme discriminatory views and intolerance at the local and broader community level by working with groups at risk of being marginalised. The project will comprise two elements

- Muslim communities and law enforcement
- Australian Muslim young people and human rights education.

Unlocking Doors also provides a foundation for further initiatives in this area for police, communities, anti-discrimination agencies and other government agencies.

I extend my appreciation to my staff at HREOC, Muslim communities' representatives, police and EOC / ADB Commissioners and staff in NSW and Victoria for your generous and compassionate commitment to making these projects successful. This is the beginning of a new and enduring relationship.

Tom Calma  
**Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner**

## **7. Summary of strategies suggested by participants in consultations and forums**

The following summary lists the key strategies suggested by participants at the Unlocking Doors consultations and forums. These are listed under each main issue identified.

### ***Addressing the diverse impact of racial and religious hatred on Muslim communities***

1. Programs or initiatives to address racial and religious hatred against Muslims need to cater for diversity, including cultural, linguistic, gender and generational differences between Muslims, rather than to target Muslims as a homogenous group.
2. A proactive education and information campaign for Muslim women on how to keep safe in public spaces and take action against racial and religious abuse.

### ***Improving community knowledge of how to report an incident to police, HREOC and other agencies, and the benefits of reporting.***

3. Community education on:
  - the role and procedures of police in NSW and Victoria, including their role in community safety, particularly for women and youth
  - the benefits of reporting racial or religious hatred crime, including any successful outcomes of reported race-related incidents
  - the role of HREOC, the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (ADB) and the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria (EOCV), and how and when to make a complaint of racial and religious discrimination or hatred to these agencies.
4. Community education should be delivered through formal and informal means, depending on the particular group targeted. For some groups, community education should be delivered through bilingual workers who have been trained by police, HREOC and ADB/EOCV to educate their community on racial and religious discrimination, hatred and abuse. This form of delivery is more effective for newly arrived Muslim communities. Trainers must be suitably skilled to deliver culturally appropriate training.

5. Materials developed for community education should be culturally, linguistically and religiously sensitive and appropriate.

***Improving police understanding about the serious impact of racial hatred and where to refer victims when it is not a crime***

6. Dissemination of information resources to all officers in NSW and Victoria police about the role of HREOC, ADB and EOCV in protecting against racial and religious discrimination and vilification. Resources are most effective if they are contextually relevant to policing in NSW and Victoria, and officers are trained in their meaning and use.
7. A review of the LEAP (VIC) and COPS (NSW) systems of recording racial and religious hatred, with the aim of improving its effectiveness, including the need for police training in identifying racial hatred.
8. An articulated system for referring victims of racial and religious discrimination, hatred and abuse from police to EOCV and ADB or HREOC, and vice versa.
9. Police training (both entry-level and ongoing) on the serious impact of racial and religious hatred and abuse on community safety and effective policing, and avenues for referral of victims when the incident is not considered to be a crime.

***Increasing trust and confidence in police and police processes***

**Improving police responses to reports of racial/religious incidents**

10. Police training to emphasise the importance of responding sympathetically to a complaint of racial and religious hatred, as part of a professional approach to policing.
11. Community education, including fact-sheets or brochures in community languages, about how and when to make a complaint about instances of police in-action or poor service.

**Addressing perceptions of police as ‘racist’**

12. More comprehensive and compulsory cultural competency training for police at the entry level as well as ongoing training for different levels of officers in relevant local areas, specifically:
  - knowledge and understanding of diverse Muslim communities (especially in local area), Islam and issues of concern facing Muslim communities, delivered in an interactive way

- human rights training, including the principle of non-discrimination, cultural rights and the practical application of these in operational policing
- creative ways of conducting training so that it is relevant to police officers, for example exchanges between police officers at different locations who report back on their experiences.

13. Increased dialogue and relationship-building between police and Muslim communities, including

- on-the-job training for police in community organisations as part of formal training
- short forums and workshops for open discussion between police and community members on particular topics
- more one-off and regular social activities to bring police and Muslim communities on an informal basis, learning from a number of successful events held by police commands locally
- continued engagement of ECLOs and MLOs with diverse Muslim communities, and a requirement that regular police be included in these activities
- formal and informal activities bringing youth and police together through PCYCs, schools and other youth networks
- regular police feedback to the communities in an informal manner about the incidence and nature of crime in the local area
- regular police visits to schools where young people can ask police questions and learn about the law, the police role and their rights
- contact between police and communities should involve not only ECLOs, MLOs and YLOs but a range of police in different roles
- police and community committees at a local and regional level, not just state-wide or national.

14. Community education, for young people in particular, on how to make a complaint about police discrimination or abuse

15. Information for communities and for police demonstrating that racism by police officers is not tolerated by police

16. Community education on the anti-terror laws, the rights of the individual, the role of state and federal police in anti-terror operations, delivered in small workshops and informal settings
17. Review of the use of ethnic descriptors and the name Middle-Eastern Organised Crime Squad by police in NSW, specifically how to address concerns that these contribute to a negative image of police among Muslim communities
18. Examination of the need for comprehensive policy initiatives such as
  - specific anti-racism policies throughout police
  - a specialist taskforce or unit to deal with racist incidents which can have a number of roles including trend identification, information point for referral of incidents, a hotline for victims.
19. Continued commitment by police in NSW and Victoria to recruit a culturally diverse police workforce, in a variety of police roles, so that police can better reflect the diversity of the community they serve.
20. Research to measure police attitudes to Muslims, showing differences by police role, local area, training background etc.
21. Research on Muslim community attitudes and expectations of police with reference to religion, ethnicity, locality, age, gender.

#### **Decreasing fear of police within communities**

22. Ongoing cultural training of police at a local level about current and emerging communities in the locality and the possible impact on policing.
23. Community education for newly arrived migrants and refugees on the role of police and facilitated contact with police in unthreatening environments.

#### **Improving perceptions of police as ineffective or inefficient**

24. Promotional campaign on the successful outcomes of complaints of race-based crime, and how to assist the police in effective reporting of crime to police.
25. Information for communities on how to follow up on a report to police, standard police procedure following a reported crime and how to make a complaint of police inaction or inefficiency if necessary.

***Improving legal remedies for incidents which are neither crimes nor acts of discrimination or vilification under anti-discrimination law***

26. Lobbying federal and state governments to amend anti-discrimination laws so that there is national consistency in protection against discrimination and vilification on the ground of religion.
27. Police training on the differences between HREOC, ADB/EOCV so that victims of racial and religious discrimination or hatred can be referred appropriately.
28. Development of a resource for community organisations and community members presenting a range of alternatives for responding to various types of racial and religious hatred and abuse.

## ***Appendix 1 – Unlocking Doors Project description***

### **What is the *Unlocking Doors* Project?**

*Unlocking Doors* is a project conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). The project is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA).

The project aims to facilitate dialogue between Muslim communities and Police in order to build on the capacity of police to respond to incidents of racial or religious hatred and abuse.

### **Background to the project**

There have been increasing concerns expressed by Arab and Muslim organisations about the rise in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice in Australia, particularly after international incidents such as the attacks of 11 September 2001, the October 2002 Bali bombings and the London bombings in July 2005.

As a response to these concerns, in 2003 the Race Discrimination Commissioner commenced a series of consultations through the project entitled, *Ismaξ National consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians*. Over 1,400 people participated in 69 consultations in all states and territories around Australia with the majority of participants reporting experiences of various forms of prejudice because of their race or religion.

The *Ismaξ* Report found that most incidents raised in the consultations were not reported to police or other government authorities due to fear of victimisation; lack of evidence and a general lack of trust in authority; lack of knowledge about the law and complaints processes; the perceived difficulty in making a complaint and the perception that outcomes were unsatisfactory.

The *Ismaξ* Report advised that mechanisms for building trust between Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies were required in order to reduce the risk of further marginalisation of Arab and Muslim communities, in particular, in young people and women.

Although the number of formal complaints to anti-discrimination and law enforcement agencies has not increased significantly since the *Ismaξ* Report, HREOC continues to hear anecdotal evidence from a range of Arab and Muslim community members and organisations about incidence of anti-Arab



and anti-Muslim prejudice, particularly after the London attacks, anti-terrorism raids in Victoria and NSW and more local events such as the Cronulla riots.

### **What are the aims of the project?**

The project aims to:

1. work with, and develop resources for, law enforcement agencies to better enable them to assist victims of racial or religious hatred and abuse
2. strengthen Muslim communities' relationship with law enforcement agencies, and inform community members of the legal avenues and services available to them as victims of racial and / or religious hatred and abuse including state and federal anti-discrimination laws and complaints processes and police processes
3. identify any particular issues for diverse Muslim groups such as Muslims in regional areas, youth and women, in order to ensure that police take their needs into account when responding to claims of racial and religious hatred and abuse
4. assist in the development of strategies that will better enable law enforcement agencies to deal with acts of racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslim people
5. as a result of the above, improve the extent to which acts of racial and religious hatred and abuse against Muslim people are being monitored and responded to by police.

### **How will the project be implemented?**

The project will consist of three phases:

1. **Initial consultations** with Muslims and police including separate consultations with Muslim women, Muslim youth, Muslims in regional areas and police.
2. **A final forum** bringing together all participants (including police) from the initial consultations and any other participants identified during the process or interested in attending.
3. The **production of resources** targeted both to the broader non-Muslim community and Muslim communities and police on discrimination and vilification.

The consultations and forums will assist in identifying gaps in existing resources and provide direction for the development of new resources and initiatives.

### **What are the consultations about?**

The initial consultations are opportunities for people to speak in a safe and welcoming environment about the relationship between police and Muslim communities, focusing on the police response to racial and religious hatred and abuse.

The aim of the consultations with Muslim communities will be to:

- a. understand Muslim community needs relating to racial and religious hatred and abuse and law enforcement
- b. provide basic information about legal protections from racial and religious hatred and abuse
- c. establish content and priorities for the project's forum, to be held in late July (see below).

The aim of the consultations with police will be to:

- a. understand police policy and processes for responding to racial and religious hatred and abuse aimed at Muslims
- b. provide basic information about state and federal anti-discrimination laws and complaints processes relevant to racial and religious hatred and abuse
- c. establish content and priorities for the project's forum, to be held in late July (see below).

There will be between five and seven consultations each in NSW and Victoria, with a specific target group:

1. Muslim community members generally
2. Muslims in regional NSW and Victoria
3. Muslim youth
4. Muslim women
5. NSW and Victoria Police

The consultations will be of approximately two hours duration and will include creative and interactive components. Refreshments will be provided. Where necessary, childcare, interpreters and transport will also be provided.

### **What are the forums about?**

A key aim of a forum is to provide an opportunity for interactive and honest dialogue between Muslim communities and police in each state, focusing on racial and religious hatred and abuse.

The forum will be subject to direction from Muslim communities and police identified in the consultation process described above. However, it is expected that a Forum will include:

- a report back from consultations
- opportunities for sharing knowledge and building of relationships between participants
- basic information on federal and state anti-discrimination laws, discrimination, harassment and abuse
- information on police services
- creative workshops and activities
- the development of future strategies for addressing racial and religious hatred and abuse, including resources.

The project also aims to produce information for Muslim communities about how to make a complaint of racial and religious hatred or abuse, as well as resources for the police to assist them respond to complaints of racial and religious hatred and abuse.

### **Who will participate in the consultations and forums?**

The consultations and forums are aimed at facilitating dialogue between all Muslims and all levels of the police in Victoria and NSW. Young people, women and Muslims living in regional areas are invited and especially encouraged to participate.

### **Where will the consultations and forums take place?**

The consultations and forums will be held in Victoria and NSW at this stage. However, it is hoped that they will provide a useful foundation for similar projects in other states and territories in the future.

### **When will the consultations and forums take place?**

At this stage HREOC is planning to hold initial consultations in June and forums in late July/August in both NSW and Victoria.

## ***Appendix 2 - Unlocking Doors Audit***

The Audit is available from our website:

[www.humanrights.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/unlocking\\_doors/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/unlocking_doors/).

## **Appendix 3 - Key stakeholders**

### **List of Key Stakeholders consulted during the unlocking Doors Project**

The following is a list of key stakeholders in Victoria and NSW, individuals and organisations, who were consulted during the project in order to establish key priorities and direction for the project. Staff from HREOC met and consulted key stakeholders either by face to face meetings or by telephone.

#### **Victoria**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>
Australasian Police Multicultural Advisory Bureau	Executive Director	Gerard	Daniells
Australian Arabic Council	Vice President	Taimor	Hazou
Australian Intercultural Society	Program Coordinator	Orhan	Cicek
Australian Intercultural Society	General Coordinator	Emre	Celik
Australian Lebanese Welfare	Youth Worker	Michael	Mawal
Australian Multicultural Foundation	Executive Director	Hass	Dellal (OAM)
Australian Somali Council of Victoria	Women's Issues Worker	Khadija	Musse
Australian Somali Council of Victoria	Chairman	Abdalla	Ahmed
Australian Somali Council of Victoria		Fuad	Jama
Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues	Director	Carmel	Guerra
Communities Together - Jesuit Social Services	Community Development Worker	Elias	Sabbagh
Cultural Perspectives and VICSEG	Arabic Cultural Consultant	Gabrielle	Fakhri
Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria	Community Consultant (CALD)	Kavitha	Chandra-Shekeran
Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria	Chief Conciliator/Chief Executive Officer	Helen	Szoke
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria Inc	Executive Officer	Prabir	Majumdar
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils	Chairperson	Voula	Messimeri
Fitzroy Legal Centre	Legal Projects Officer	Simone	Elias
Fitzroy Legal Centre	Community Development Worker	Sam	Biondo
Indonesian Society of Victoria	Vice-President	Nunung	Bonser
Islamic Centre of Victoria	Imam	Fehmi	Naji el-Imam
Islamic Council of Victoria	President	Malcolm	Thomas
Islamic Council of Victoria	Executive Member	Sherene	Hassan
Islamic Council of Victoria	Executive Member	Waleed	Aly
Islamic Girls Women's Group Inc.	Administration Officer	Amy	Chalcik
Islamic Girls Women's Group Inc	Treasurer	Maryum	Aziz
Islamic Women's Welfare Council of	Manager	Joumanah	El-Matrah

Victoria			
Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria	Research and Education Worker	Nuzhat	Lotia
Moreland Turkish Association	President	Cemal	Akdeniz
Moreland Turkish Association	Secretary	Nurper	Goker
Northern Migrant Resource Centre	Chief Executive Officer	Stephanie	Lagos
Northern Migrant Resource Centre	Youth Settlement Worker	Abdinur	Weli
Northern Migrant Resource Centre, Whittlesea Office	Family and Community Settlement Worker	Khairy	Majeed
Victoria Police	Commander	Ashley	Dickinson
Victoria Police	Superintendent	Tony	de Ridder
Victoria Police	Manager, Multicultural Advisory Unit, Community and Cultural Division	Anthony	Abate
Victoria Police	Coordinator, Multicultural Liaison Officer, Community and Cultural Division	Ali	Gurdag
Victoria Police	Superintendent, Community and Cultural Division	Bill	DeBruyn
South Eastern Migrant Resource Centre	CEO	Jenny	Semple
Victorian Arabic Social Services	Manager	Leila	Alloush
Victorian Multicultural Commission	Chairperson	George	Lekakis
Victorian Multicultural Commission	Commissioner	Yasser	Soliman
VITS Language Link	General Manager and President of Australian Council of Bosnian Herzegovinian Organisations	Senada	Softic - Telalovic
Working Women's Health	Statewide FARREP Coordinator	Samia	Baho

### **New South Wales**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>FirstName</b>	<b>LastName</b>
Affinity Intercultural Foundation	President, Director	Mehmet	Ozalp
Affinity Intercultural Foundation	Vice President, Director	Zuleyha	Keskin
African Communities Council (also ECLO Auburn Police)		Rosemary	Kariuki
African Communities Council and Mission Australia	Team Leader/Volunteer Coordinator	Hashim	Elhassan
Al Ghazali Centre	Founder and President	Afroz	Ali

Al Zahra Islamic Council	Chairperson	Fatima	Hamdan
Al Zahra Islamic Council	Project Manager	Ibtisam	Hammoud
Arab Council Australia	Executive Director	Randa	Kattan
Auburn Community Development Network	Auburn Arts Officer	Alissar	Chidiac
Auburn Community Development Network	Centre Manager	Mark	Lack
Australian Federation of Islamic Councils	Chief Executive Officer	Amjad	Ali Mehboob
Australian Muslim Civil Rights Advocacy Network	Co-Convenor	Agnes	Chong
Canterbury Bankstown Migrant Resource Centre and Indonesian community member	Chairperson	Jon	Soemarjono
Community Arts Development Worker		Paula	Abboud
Bankstown Multicultural Youth Centre	Manager	Mary	Malak
Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations	Director	Kuranda	Seyfi Seyit
Independent Centre for Research Australia	Youth Worker	Fadi	Rahman
Information and Cultural Exchange	Director	Lena	Nahlous
Information and Cultural Exchange	Switch Coordinator	Fadia	Abboud
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Executive Officer	Jane	Brock
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Families First Worker	Rahile	Cakir
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Domestic Violence Worker	Mariam	James
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Domestic Violence Policy Officer	Kyungia	Jung
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Information Officer	Yani	Mariyani-Squire
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Family Support Worker	Amela	Polovina
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Domestic Violence Worker	Rukhshana	Sarwar
Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW	Domestic Violence Worker	Emina	Kovac
Islamic Friendship Association of Australia		Keysar	Trad
Islamic Council of NSW	Vice President	Ali	Roude
Islamic Council of NSW	Consultant	Nada	Roude
Islamic Welfare Centre	Imam	Khalil	Chami
Lebanese Community Council of NSW	CSS Project Coordinator	Souhair	Afiouny JP
Lebanese Community Council of	Coordinator	Louay	Mustapha

NSW			
Lebanese Muslim Association	President	Ahmad	Kamaledine
Mission of Hope	Director, Psychologist	Hanan	Dover
Muslim Women's National Network of Australia and Muslim Community Reference Group and Chair of Women's Sub-Group	President	Aziza	Abdel-Halim AM
NSW Anti-Discrimination Board and Community Relations Commission	Chairperson	Stepan	Kerkyasharian AM
NSW Government Premiers Department	Director, Crime Prevention, Strategic Projects Division	Garry	Dobson
NSW Police	Commissioner	Ken	Moroney
NSW Police	Deputy Commissioner	Andrew	Scipione
NSW Police	Commander, Bankstown LAC	Dave	Darcy
NSW Police	Manager, Cultural Diversity Team	Chitrita	Mukerjee
NSW Police	Acting Senior Programs Officer, Cultural Diversity Team	David	Evanian-Thomas
NSW Police	Commander, Liverpool LAC	Michael	Plotecki
NSW Police	National Manager, Human Resources	Mark Ney	
NSW Police	Commander (former), Campsie LAC	John	Richardson
NSW Police	Chief Inspector, Campsie LAC	Geoff	Allen
NSW Police	Ethnic Community Liaison Officer, Campsie LAC	Gandhi	Sindyan
NSW Police	Constable, Crime Prevention Officer, Campsie LAC	Debbie	Chard
Solicitor/community worker		Shahzad	Rind
United Muslim Women's Association	Manager	Maha	Krayem Abdo
United Muslim Women's Association	Bankstown Women's Support Centre	Wafa	Zaim
UTS Shopfront	Research Manager	Tanja	Dreher
University of Western Sydney	Lecturer	Michael	Kennedy



## ***Appendix 4 – List of consultations***

### **Consultations in Victoria**

**Muslim Youth Forum – 1**

Flemington Community Centre, Friday, 2 June 2006

**Open Muslim Communities Forum**

Mark Street Hall, Saturday, 3 June 2006

**Muslim Women’s Forum - 1**

Hume Global Learning Centre, Tuesday, 6 June 2006

**Muslim Women’s Forum - 2**

Springvale Neighbourhood House, Wednesday, 7 June 2006

**Muslim Youth Forum - 2**

Hume Global Learning Centre, Friday, 9 June 2006

**Muslim Youth Forum Shepparton**

Shepparton, Thursday, 8 June 2006

**Muslim Women’s Forum Shepparton**

Shepparton, Thursday, 8 June 2006

**Muslim Men’s Forum Shepparton**

Shepparton, Thursday, 8 June 2006

**Shepparton Police Forum**

Shepparton, Friday, 9 June 2006

**Meeting with Multicultural Liaison Officers, Victoria Police**

Melbourne, Wednesday 16 August 2006

### **Consultations in NSW**

**Muslim Women’s Forum - 1**

Bankstown Town Hall, Tuesday, 13 June 2006

**Muslim Youth Forum - 1**

Auburn Town Hall, Wednesday, 14 June 2006

**Open Muslim Communities Forum**

Bankstown Town Hall, Saturday, 17 June 2006

**Muslim Youth Forum - 2**

Canterbury League Club, Tuesday, 20 June 2006

**Muslim Women's Forum - 2**

Liverpool Library, Thursday, 22 June 2006

**Muslim Women's Forum Illawarra**

Cringila, 15 August 2006

## ***Appendix 5 - Unlocking Doors DVD***

The *Unlocking Doors DVD* will be available and can be viewed from our website from the 13 August 2007.

## **Appendix 6 - Unlocking Doors Forum programs**

### **Unlocking Doors Forum Program - NSW**

#### **PROGRAM**

### **Unlocking Doors Forum – Victoria Muslim communities and police tackling racial and religious discrimination**

**Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
Funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

**Thursday 7 September  
State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston St, Melbourne**

<b>9:30-10:00</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>10:00-10:30</b>	<b>Welcoming session</b>
	<p>(MC - Majida Abboud-Saab, SBS Radio)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to country by Joy Murphy, Senior Woman Elder, Wurundjeri People</li> <li>• ‘The Unlocking Doors Project’ – Tom Calma, Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)</li> <li>• ‘A view from the Unlocking Doors consultations’ – Faten Mohamed</li> <li>• The role of Victoria Police – Spt Tony de Ridder, Region 3, Broadmeadows, Victoria Police</li> </ul>
<b>10:30-11.15</b>	<p><b>‘Responding to racial and religious discrimination and abuse’</b></p> <p>This is a ‘Roving-microphone’ session facilitated by Majida Abboud-Saab, SBS Radio. The discussion will focus on three questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How racial and religious discrimination and abuse is experienced by diverse Muslim communities?</li> <li>• Whether individuals respond to this discrimination and abuse by going to police and other agencies, and why or why not?</li> <li>• How can we better meet the needs of those who have been discriminated against or abused? What strategies do we have to improve the response of police to discrimination and abuse?</li> </ul>

<b>11:15-11:30</b>	<b>Morning tea</b>
<b>11:30-12:30</b>	<b>Concurrent workshops – ‘Tools for responding to racism’</b>
<b>Workshop 1</b>	<p><b>‘Safety strategies for women when harassed and abused’ (women only)</b> Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Multicultural Liaison Officer, Vic Police; Samar Mougharbel, Springvale Neighbourhood House</p> <p>What should I do if someone abuses me and harasses me in a public place? Should I respond? Who should I contact? How does this affect my feeling of safety in my community? What longer term strategies are there to help Muslim women to feel safe in their communities?</p>
<b>Workshop 2</b>	<p><b>‘What are our human rights and responsibilities?’</b> Margaret Donaldson, Director, Race Discrimination Unit, HREOC; Bridget Akers, Complaints Unit, HREOC; Kavitha Chandra-Shekeran, Community Consultant (CALD), Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria</p> <p>Is racial and religious discrimination and abuse against international human rights law? What do I do about it in Australia? What responsibilities do individuals and organisations such as the police have to uphold and protect human rights?</p>
<b>Workshop 3</b>	<p><b>‘Young people, discrimination and abuse’</b> Michael Mawal, Youth Worker, Australian Lebanese Welfare; Faten Mohamed, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues</p> <p>This interactive workshop asks young people to devise strategies for dealing with different kinds of racism and abuse, including ideas for improving police and community responses.</p>
<b>12:30-1:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:30-2:30</b>	<p><b>Panel session – ‘Policy approaches to tackling discrimination and abuse targeting Muslims’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashley Dickinson, Operation Commander, Victoria Police</li> <li>• Helen Szoke, Chief Executive Officer, Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria</li> <li>• Sherene Hassan, Executive Member, Islamic Council of Victoria</li> </ul>
<b>2:30-2:45</b>	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
<b>2:45-4:00</b>	<b>Concurrent workshops – ‘Strategies to improve police and community responses to discrimination and abuse’</b>
<b>Workshop 4</b>	<p><b>‘Building strong community and police relations’</b> Superintendent Tony de Ridder, Region 3, Victoria Police; Leila Alloush, Manager, Victorian Arabic Social Services, Fuad Jama, Australian Somali Council of Victoria (Facilitator: Tom Calma, Race Discrimination Commissioner, HREOC)</p> <p>What benefits are there to establishing and nurturing a dialogue between police and Muslim communities? How can a dialogue assist in protecting communities from racism? What barriers are there to establishing a relationship, and how do we overcome them? What are the best practice principles for strong police and community relations?</p>
<b>Workshop 5</b>	<p><b>‘Understanding culturally diverse Muslim communities’</b> Samia Baho, Director, Centre for African Australian Women’s Issues; Sahin</p>

	<p>Sahinkaya, Multicultural Liaison Officer, Victoria Police (Facilitator: Omeima Sukkarieh, Acting Senior Policy Officer, HREOC)</p> <p>How do people's cultures and experiences in their country of origin affect the way that they react to racial and religious discrimination and abuse in Australia? How does it affect their views of police? Why is it important for police to understand culture and background? What do police and service providers need to know about communities and what is the best way of providing this information?</p>
<b>4:00-4:30</b>	<p><b>Closing session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of workshops</li> <li>• Closing comments – Tom Calma, Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, HREOC</li> </ul>

## Unlocking Doors Forum Program - Victoria

### PROGRAM

#### **Unlocking Doors Forum – NSW Muslim communities and police tackling racial and religious discrimination**

**Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
(project funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs)**

**Monday 18 September 2006**

**Pacific International Hotel  
477 Chapel Road, Bankstown, NSW  
(opposite Bankstown TAFE)**

<b>9:30-10:00</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>10:00-11:00</b>	<b>Welcoming session</b>
	<p>(MC - Majida Abboud-Saab, SBS Radio)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music by Glen Doyle</li> <li>• Welcome to country by Sylvia Scott, Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.</li> <li>• ‘The Unlocking Doors Project’ – Tom Calma, Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)</li> <li>• ‘View from an Unlocking Doors consultation participant’ – Mona Trad</li> <li>• The role of NSW Police - Ken Moroney, NSW Police Commissioner</li> </ul>
<b>11:00-11:15</b>	<b>Morning tea</b>
<b>11:15-12:15</b>	<p><b>‘Responding to racial and religious discrimination and abuse’</b></p> <p>This is a ‘Roving-microphone’ session facilitated by Majida Abboud-Saab, SBS Radio. The discussion will focus on three questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How racial and religious discrimination and abuse is experienced by diverse Muslim communities?</li> <li>• Whether individuals respond to this discrimination and abuse by going to police and other agencies, and why or why not?</li> <li>• How can we better meet the needs of those who have been discriminated against or abused? What strategies do we have to improve the response of police to discrimination and abuse?</li> </ul>
<b>12:15-1:00</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:00-2:15</b>	<b>Concurrent workshops – ‘Tools for responding to racism’</b>
<b>Workshop 1</b>	<b>‘Safety strategies for women when harassed and abused’ (women only)</b> Constable Deb Chard, Campsie Local Area Command, NSW Police; Ibtisam

	<p>Hammoud, Al Zahra Muslim Women’s Association</p> <p>What should I do if someone abuses me and harasses me in a public place? Should I respond? Who should I contact? How does this affect my feeling of safety in my community? What longer term strategies are there to help Muslim women to feel safe in their communities?</p>
<b>Workshop 2</b>	<p><b>‘What are our human rights and responsibilities?’</b> Margaret Donaldson, Director, Race Discrimination Unit, HREOC; Bridget Akers, Complaints Unit, HREOC; Claire Williams, NSW Anti-Discrimination Board</p> <p>Is racial and religious discrimination and abuse against international human rights law? What do I do about it in Australia? What responsibilities do individuals and organisations such as the police have to uphold and protect human rights?</p>
<b>Workshop 3</b>	<p><b>‘Young people, discrimination and abuse’</b> Valentina Angelovska, St George Youth Services</p> <p>This interactive workshop asks young people to devise strategies for dealing with different kinds of racism, bullying and abuse, including ideas for improving police and community responses.</p>
<b>2:15-2:30</b>	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
<b>2:30-2:45</b>	<b>Report back from Workshops 1,2 and 3</b>
<b>2:45-4:15</b>	<p><b>Panel discussion: ‘Building strong community and police relations’</b> Michael Plotecki, Commander, Liverpool Local Area Command, NSW Police; Dave Darcy, Commander, Bankstown Local Area Command, NSW Police; Maha Krayem Abdo, United Muslim Women’s Association; Fadi Rahman, ICRA Youth Centre; Hashim Elhassan (facilitated by Kuranda Seyfi Seyit, FAIR)</p> <p>What benefits are there to establishing and nurturing a dialogue between police and Muslim communities? How can a dialogue assist in protecting communities from racism? What barriers are there to establishing a relationship, and how do we overcome them? What are the best practice principles for strong police and community relations?</p>
<b>4:15-4:30</b>	<p><b>Closing session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing comments – Tom Calma, Acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, HREOC</li> </ul>