

WHO EXPERIENCES RACISM?

Anyone can experience racist behaviour, such as being abused because of the colour of your skin. It's never okay, even as a one-off incident. And it's even worse for people who experience it frequently, many of whom also experience discrimination¹ in other areas of their lives.

Groups that regularly experience racism include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from culturally diverse backgrounds. They also often have to deal with systemic discrimination, which limits their access to the same opportunities and resources as many people from Anglo-Australian backgrounds.²

"I don't see that casual racism is acceptable. People who perceive they have the right and luxury to engage in racist practices do not understand that they are adding to a lifetime of injury for those of us who have had to navigate racism."

— Kath, 50



For more information about What You Say Matters and the Racism. It Stops With Me campaign go to itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

"Just being born Indigenous makes you feel second class."

— Greg, 35

A survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria found that 97 per cent had experienced racism within the last year.³ Two out of every three people had experienced **eight or more incidences a year**.⁴ Imagine the impact that would have on you, your family and your community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also still dealing with the effects of past laws and government policies which resulted in them being removed to missions and reserves or taken away from their families.

These laws and policies have caused huge amounts of hurt and pain for individuals, families and communities, which shows up in lots of different ways - poor health, high rates of mental illness and family breakdowns.

In many cases this disadvantage has been passed from one generation to the next, meaning that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today miss out on the opportunities that other Australians take for granted.

RACISM.
IT STOPS
WITH ME



Australian
Human Rights
Commission



Australian Government
Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

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MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

"We get told that we cannot be trusted, that we are lazy. This is much harder to fight than looking for work or houses."
— Chidike, 27

Many migrants and refugees also regularly experience racism, but not all in the same way. Their experiences are often shaped by when they came to Australia and where they have come from.

Migrants and refugees who have recently arrived in Australia — especially those whose skin colour, speech or dress is different than we're used to — are more likely to be targets of racism.

For example, research has found that we are more accepting of migrants from countries with a long history of migration to Australia, such as Italy and Greece, and that we tend to feel more negative towards "newer" groups of migrants from the Middle East and African countries.⁵

Media reports and commentary that use negative stereotypes about refugees and new migrants can fuel prejudice against these groups in the wider community.

And these attitudes can make it very difficult for new arrivals to find housing and jobs, and to feel connected to their communities.

"I am an African immigrant, white Australians tend to assume I don't have a car, that I'm on welfare, that I can't read or express myself well. After they get to know me, they learn to see the person and not the race."

— Kgosi, 19

There are no reasons or excuses for racism. It's just wrong. And in many cases, racism is against the law. For more information, see the "What does the law say" factsheet.

If racism happens to you, find out what you can do in the "What can you do?" factsheet.

If you see racism happening at school, in public or online, stand up to it. There's lots of safe ways that you can help. Find out more in the "What you can do?" factsheet.

You can also get support or advice to deal with a difficult situation from organisations like **Kids Helpline** (www.kidshelp.com.au) and **ReachOut.com** (au.reachout.com).

1 Discrimination is when a person is treated unfairly compared to someone else in the same situation because of a particular characteristic, such as their race, sex, age or disability. For example, it would be discrimination if security in a store only stops people from a particular racial background to check their bags.

2 See "What is racism" for definition of systemic racism.

3 VicHealth, Mental health impacts of racial discrimination in Victorian Aboriginal communities (2012), p2. At <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-discrimination/Mental-health-impacts-of-racial-discrimination-in-Victorian-Aboriginal-communities.aspx>

4 Ibid.

5 A Markus, Mapping Social Cohesion 2011: the Scanlon Foundation Survey (2012), p3