

Victoria's anti-racism strategy 2024–2029

SUMMARY





Description of the artwork

The Acknowledgement of Country artwork, honours Traditional Owners, the lands, skies and waters. It pays homage to the many stories embedded within every detail of Country; the markings within the trees, the formation of the waterways and all Mother Earth's creations.

Bunjil is the creator spirit of the Wurundjeri people, positioned in the centre to acknowledge the Traditional Owners, Elders and their stories.

The wings are spread out to represent openness and Bunjil guiding us on our journey whilst we visit on this Country.

About the artist

Nakia Cadd is a Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Bunitj, Boon Wurrung woman who grew up in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. Nakia's work has strong design elements of line work that connect with her family lines and landscapes of her Countries. Her artwork is also inspired by her motherhood journey, family and Country. She likes to use art opportunities and platforms to creatively honour and retell her family's stories that symbolise immense strength and resilience.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waters we now know as Victoria.

We honour and pay our respects to First Peoples' Elders past and present, and we recognise the continuing strength of Victoria's First Peoples.

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Introduction

A diverse Victoria

Victoria is a proud, multicultural and multifaith state. We value diversity, including the 65,000 years of living First Peoples culture.

Victorians speak more than 200 languages. We have a rich blend of traditions, beliefs and cultural practices.

This diversity makes Victoria vibrant and unique. It is something we should all be proud of.

Racism is still a problem

Our diversity is a strength. But racism is a problem that too many Victorians face every day.

Racism is a form of discrimination where a person or group of people are treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity. It is based on the belief that some races or ethnicities are better than others. It involves using power to treat people differently in a way that is harmful.

A lack of information and community trust in services can mean that racism is under-reported.

Racism shows up in different ways.

It includes outright discrimination and verbal abuse. It also includes more subtle forms of exclusion and unfair treatment, such as not being given the same access or opportunities as others.

It can happen in public spaces, workplaces, schools and even when accessing services like health care and housing.

These experiences can leave people feeling:

- unsafe
- unwelcome
- disconnected from the broader community.

In 2022, 3 in 5 First Peoples (60%) reported **experiencing racism in Australia.**¹



In 2023, 1 in 5 people (18%) reported **experiencing racism in Australia.**²



3 in 5 Australians (63%) have **negative views of one or more migrant groups** from Asia, Africa or the Middle East or a non-Christian religion.³



3 in 5 Australians (62%) see racism as a **'very big' or 'fairly big' problem.**⁴



Racism and First Peoples

For First Peoples, racism is a lasting effect of colonisation. Colonisation involved establishing Victoria with the specific intent of excluding Aboriginal people and their laws, cultures, customs and traditions.

This includes a type of racism called structural racism. Structural racism is when unfair treatment or disadvantage is built into a society's laws, policies and systems.

Throughout our history, First Peoples have been excluded from social and economic opportunities. The policies and practices of governments have created a gap that still haunts us today.

We won't improve First Peoples' health, education and economic outcomes until we recognise the truth of what happened.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission is helping us understand our history from the perspective of First Peoples. It is showing how it affects their present. It is also exploring Treaty as the pathway to practical changes and solutions.

Treaty gives us a pathway to change what isn't working. It will finally give First Peoples a say on the policies that affect them.

Treaty is about making sure First Peoples get a say over:

- their health care
- their family's housing
- their kids' education
- the practice of their culture, now and into the future.

This is called self-determination. Through Treaty, we can bring Victorians together and feel shared pride in First Peoples' heritage, history and culture.

Why we need to tackle racism

Racism does more than just harm the people who experience it.

It weakens the social fabric of our state by:

- creating divisions
- reducing people's sense of trust and safety
- stopping people from fully taking part in society.

It can lead to poorer health outcomes and limit educational and employment opportunities. It can erode trust in public institutions.

When racism is left unchallenged, it holds us all back.

What we're doing about it

We know that if we want to create a truly inclusive and fair society, we must actively fight against racism.

That's why we have developed the *Victorian anti-racism strategy*, the first of its kind in Victoria.

Over the next 5 years, we will use the strategy to guide our efforts to stop racism. We will use these actions to challenge racist behaviours and attitudes. We will remove barriers caused by racism. We will also do better to support people affected by racism.

By working together, we can build a Victoria where everyone feels safe, valued and included.

This is a shared journey towards a future where racism has no place in our communities. A place where our diversity is truly celebrated.



Listening to the voices of the community

Before we wrote the strategy, we sat down to listen.

We spoke with First Peoples and multicultural and multifaith communities through targeted consultations.

We wanted to make sure we heard the voices of the people most affected by racism. They shared their stories, ideas and hopes for a better future.

We also spoke to experts and practitioners from areas like health, education and justice. These experts helped us understand the different ways racism affects people's lives.

We also had a public survey where all Victorians had an opportunity to share their ideas.

More than **670 people** contributed to this process.

Victorians' experiences of racism

People across the state shared how racism affects them in everyday situations. This included in rural and regional areas.

Racism in the community and public places

Many people told us about the discrimination they face in public places.

This could be things like:

- being followed by security personnel in shops
- being harassed on the street
- treated unfairly by staff in restaurants and shops.

People also told us they often experience racism when they play sport. Racist abuse can come from other players or spectators.

It can make sports environments unwelcoming or even hostile.

Through the strategy, we will work to create safer, more inclusive environments where everyone can take part.



Racism in online spaces and the media

Unfortunately, we heard that racism also thrives in online spaces and in the media.

Online, it can include bullying, hate speech and calls to violence. Online racism has real-world impacts. It can lead to violence against First Peoples and people from multicultural and multifaith communities.

Negative stereotypes in the media can fuel discrimination in real life. This makes people from certain backgrounds feel unsafe and unwelcome.

Addressing racism online and in the media is important. These platforms play a big role in how communities are perceived and treated.

Racism in government and community services

Racism can make it harder for people to access government and community services.

People told us that sometimes these services do not understand or meet their cultural, faith or language needs. For some, negative experiences and unfair government policies in the past have led to a lack of trust in government services. This means that people may be less likely to seek help at times when they really need it.

Racism in these settings can be reduced using cultural safety. This is when services create an environment where people feel safe, valued and understood.

When government and community services provide cultural safety, it makes it easier for all Victorians to get the services they need, no matter their background.

Racism in health, justice, employment and education

People told us that they face racism in important areas such as health care, the justice system, at work and at school. This can make existing inequalities worse.

People who experience racism are more likely to have poor mental and physical health. This is made worse by healthcare systems that do not cater for the needs of:

- First Peoples
- multicultural communities
- multifaith communities.

Similarly, racism in the justice system means that First Peoples and some multicultural communities can be treated unfairly. People from these backgrounds are over-represented in the justice system. This can make them distrust police.

In the workplace, racism takes different forms. It can include person-to-person racism or exist in policies or processes like hiring and promotion. This can lead to unequal access to work opportunities for some communities.

Our schools and education settings can also be unsafe places because of racism. Teachers and staff may not have the tools they need to address racism when it occurs. They may treat racism as bullying or see the victim and perpetrator as being equally to blame.

We will work to prevent racism in these settings. We will also make sure we respond to it effectively when it occurs.

Our commitment: the Victorian anti-racism strategy

The *Victorian anti-racism strategy* is our plan to prevent and respond to racism.

This strategy is a direct response to the voices of the community. It aims to create a future where racism is no longer a barrier to living a full and equal life in Victoria. The strategy has the following vision, goals, actions and principles.

Our vision

A Victoria free from racism and discrimination, where all Victorians enjoy equal rights, freedoms and protections, and thrive in safe, healthy and supportive communities.

Our priority goals



Goal 1.

Racist attitudes, behaviours and beliefs are recognised, challenged and rejected



Goal 2.

Government services and workplaces are safe, accessible and non-discriminatory



Goal 3.

Racism and discrimination are no longer barriers to participation, progress, safety and success across all sectors



Goal 4.

People subjected to racism receive appropriate and culturally safe services and supports

Key areas for action

Key actions to achieve our priority goals:

- Deliver anti-racism campaigns in sport to drive behaviour change.
- Support community-driven anti-racism initiatives at the local level.
- Strengthen protections to address racism and vilification.
- Build the capability of complaint and oversight bodies to better respond to reports of racism.
- Reduce racism and discrimination in policing.
- Embed monitoring and oversight of anti-racism efforts.

Our guiding principles

These values guide this strategy and the way we will realise our vision:



We will **combat racism and discrimination** across all areas of public life.



We will be guided by the **voices of communities** and people's **lived experience**.



We will take action that is **targeted, practical and impactful**.



We will **build on work already underway** across Victoria.



We will take action based on **best practice, data and evidence**.



We will take actions that are **statewide and locally driven**.



We will be **intersectional** in our approach.⁵

How we will measure progress

**Creating an anti-racism strategy is a big step.
But it's only the beginning.**

To ensure the strategy makes a real difference in people's lives, we need to track its progress and assess its impact over time.

We will do this by developing a monitoring and evaluation framework. This framework will include transparent and evidence-based measures.

The framework will also help us review and adjust actions that do not contribute to the results we want.

What success will look like

We will not only measure success in terms of policy changes.

We will also measure real improvements in people's lives.

We will know we are on track for success when:

- more people understand they have a role to play in standing up to racism
- communities feel more connected and believe multiculturalism makes their area better

- we have strong community-led organisations that can tackle and respond to racism
- government organisations and services are fairer, more accessible and culturally safe
- employers and organisations are more inclusive
- reporting racism is easier and people get the help they need
- fewer people experience racism.

We are aiming for a Victoria where all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity or religion, live free from fear and discrimination.

It will be a state where:

- diversity is celebrated
- everyone has equal opportunities to thrive
- racism has no place in our communities.



Building a better Victoria together: the call to action

Creating a fairer, more inclusive Victoria requires more than just government policies. It demands action from everyone in the community.

We all need to work together to stop racism. This includes individuals, communities, organisations and businesses across the state.

We invite all Victorians to play their part in building a better future.

A shared responsibility

Fighting racism is everyone's responsibility.

The strategy sets out actions we will take to stop racism at 3 levels:

- interpersonal
- institutional
- structural.

However, real change also requires action on the personal and community levels.

By recognising and speaking out against racist behaviours, everyone can help to create a culture where discrimination is no longer tolerated.

Everyone can stand up for what's right: in the workplace, at school, in sports clubs and online.

When we work together, we can change attitudes and behaviours. This will create a more respectful and inclusive society.

How you can help

Here are some practical steps that everyone can take to make a difference:

- educate yourself and others
- challenge or report racist behaviours
- support community-led anti-racism initiatives
- promote inclusion in your workplace or school
- advocate for change.

To learn more about action you can take, visit [Victoria's anti-racism strategy website](https://vic.gov.au/victorias-anti-racism-strategy) <<https://vic.gov.au/victorias-anti-racism-strategy>>.

Working together to make it happen

The success of this strategy depends on everyone playing their part.

Together, we can build a Victoria that is not just multicultural but a state that is truly inclusive, fair and free from racism.



Endnotes

- 1 Polity Research and Consulting, *2022 Australian Reconciliation Barometer*, Reconciliation Australia, 2022. <<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/2022-australian-reconciliation-barometer>>.
- 2 J O'Donnell, *Mapping social cohesion 2023*, Scanlon Foundation, 2023, p 68. <<https://scanloninstitute.org.au/mapping-social-cohesion-2023>>.
- 3 O'Donnell, *Mapping social cohesion 2023*, p 72.
- 4 O'Donnell, *Mapping social cohesion 2023*, p 83; A Markus, *Mapping social cohesion: the Scanlon Foundation Surveys 2020*, Scanlon Foundation, 2020.
- 5 Recognising intersectionality means being aware of how other forms of discrimination overlap with and can worsen experiences of racism for Victorians, such as sexism, ageism, homophobia or ableism.

