

# National Anti-Racism Framework

Summary





## Summary

**Following an extensive process of community and sector consultations over several years, the Australian Human Rights Commission has produced a National Anti-Racism Framework to serve as a central reference point for a whole of society approach to eliminating racism.**

The Framework acts a roadmap for governments, non-government organisations, businesses, and civil society organisations to take anti-racist action across sectors.

The Commission heard consistently from First Nations and other negatively racialised people that systemic and structural racism is deeply embedded throughout Australia and requires an urgent national response.

The report identifies key priority areas in need of reform and provides recommendations for transformative change to eliminate racism across Australia.

The 63 recommendations are a call to action for reform across Australia's relevant systems and structures, including in the justice and legal system, health, education, workplaces, media and the arts, and data collection.

The Commission intends for the Framework to be a living document that grows as communities' experiences of racism evolve.

## OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The Commission calls on the Australian Government to lead a national response to eliminating racism that begins with truth-telling for First Nations peoples and embeds their right to self-determination.**
- **As a priority, the Australian Government must develop two Implementation Plans for the Framework, one of which is specific to First Nations peoples and their unique experiences of racism. These Implementation Plans must cover anti-racism action across all sectors, including health, education, the media and arts, and the justice system.**
- **The Commission recommends the Framework be grounded in an understanding of racism that is intersectional, community-centric, and grounded in truth-telling. It should recognise the similarities and differences between forms of racism that affect different communities. This approach should inform all anti-racism action under the Framework.**
- **The development of a nationally recognised definition of First Nations Cultural Safety, with minimum standards, for application across sectors is also recommended.**

## First Nations peoples

**First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous people have consistently told the Commission that the experiences of First Nations peoples must be central to all anti-racism action and inform all strategies across national outcome areas.**

First Nations communities have called on governments to commit to transformative changes that address entrenched inequalities.

Some specific recommendations for this include: incorporating provisions in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into all relevant domestic laws; a nationally recognised definition of First Nations cultural safety; First Nations-focused anti-racism content in school curricula; formalised partnerships between Australian governments and First Nations community-controlled organisations; and strategies to address racism experienced by First Nations people in workplaces.

## Legal protections and reform

**Communities have highlighted to the Commission the limited effectiveness of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* in addressing systemic and structural racism in Australia.**

A major recommended reform includes the introduction of a positive duty under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, which would require businesses and organisations to have policies and procedures in place to prevent racism. This recommendation is similar to recent reforms to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and also as proposed by the Disability Royal Commission for introduction into the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Other recommendations include reviewing the Australian Constitution, as well as our employment, migration, citizenship, and counterterrorism laws, for their potential discriminatory application and effect on different communities; the introduction of a national Human Rights Act; and introducing stronger legal protections against online hate.

## Police and justice

**The Commission acknowledges that racism, especially racism targeting First Nations peoples, is pervasive across the systems and processes which underpin the justice system, including in all stages of the legal system.**

Australian governments must take immediate action to implement systemic reforms as a matter of priority. Recommendations include establishing an independent body to oversee the prevention of First Nations people's deaths in custody; ensuring all places of detention and the duration of detention comply with international human rights standards; conducting an independent external audit of justice systems across the country to

identify and address structural racism; increasing support for community-controlled legal and support services; investing in approaches to diversion and rehabilitation for people in contact with the justice system; and implementing anti-racism training for police and other workers in the justice system.

The Framework also calls for more effective action by all Australian governments to address far-right extremism and white supremacy, both in real life and online.



## Education

**Places of learning – from early childhood through to tertiary institutions – were identified as key settings for preventative education about racism.**

Recommendations include introducing nationally consistent anti-racism content in school curricula, and embedding knowledge, scholarship, and texts by First Nations and other negatively racialised communities in curricula and education materials. Ongoing funding for national education campaigns about preventing racism is also recommended.

Culturally safe mechanisms for students and staff to report racism, as well as a holistic cultural safety review of education provision in primary and secondary schools, are recommended. The development and implementation of cultural safety reforms must be informed by consultations with children and young people throughout the review.

## Health

**Communities stressed the importance of tackling racism in the health sector, as well as addressing the harmful impacts that racism inflicts on the health of First Nations and other negatively racialised individuals and communities.**

Communities called for embedding cultural safety and anti-racism in health practices as a priority solution. Recommendations also include mandating cultural safety education for all health care providers, as well as providing adequate resources to health care providers, particularly community-controlled providers, to integrate trauma-informed practices into mainstream healthcare systems and to develop targeted programs and interpretation services.

Co-design with First Nations peoples, and people from other negatively racialised communities, in public health and social policy discussions is also recommended as a priority action.

## Media and the arts

**Media and arts organisations were highlighted as having significant impacts on how racism manifests and how it can be addressed.**

The Framework calls for stronger regulation of how the media reports on First Nations and other negatively racialised communities, as well as how digital media allows users to report and remove racist content. Other recommendations concern better approaches to storytelling about and for communities which experience racism, including commissioning more work from artists and creators from First Nations and other negatively racialised communities, and funding community media.

Media outlets must also audit their content and workforce to ensure targets are being met, and policies are not creating inequitable outcomes for First Nations and other negatively racialised people.



## Workplaces

**Workplaces were identified to the Commission as vital settings for addressing racism.**

Key recommendations include developing and implementing: internal workplace anti-racism strategies for all employers; mandatory cultural safety and anti-racism training for all workers including parliamentarians; behavioural codes of conduct for all parliamentarians and their staff; national standards for reporting racism in workplaces; and strategies for recruiting and retaining staff from First Nations and other negatively racialised backgrounds, particularly in leadership and senior roles.

## Data

**The Commission has found that data on racism in Australia is limited, inconsistent across jurisdictions, and often ad-hoc.**

Recommendations call for a national, comprehensive approach to collecting data for anti-racism purposes that embeds Indigenous Data Sovereignty, Indigenous Data Governance and a human right-based approach. The Commission recommends the development of a National Anti-Racism Data Plan, in which communities with lived experience of racism are meaningfully engaged in co-designing a national approach

to data about race and racism. This includes the development of new population and administrative data standards on Indigenous status and ethnicity, strengthening data about different forms of racism, and initiatives to address personal and structural barriers to reporting racism.

## Monitoring, evaluation and learning

**The Framework highlights the importance of sufficient resourcing for a comprehensive and community-led approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework's implementation.**

Relevant learnings from a strong mechanism must be incorporated into the ongoing implementation process to ensure the Framework is making a positive change in communities' experiences of racism.

# National Anti-Racism Framework

## National plan

covering all levels of government and community partnerships

## 10 year duration

with 5 year implementation plans

## National understandings

of racism and cultural safety for First Nations communities to guide all actions

## PRINCIPLES

### The National Anti-Racism Framework should:

- acknowledge the **systemic and structural nature** of racism, including the historical and **ongoing impacts** of settler colonisation on First Nations people
- be intersectional, community-centric, and recognise racism as a **complex and shifting phenomenon**

- **embed truth-telling and self-determination** for First Nations peoples
- be adequately, appropriately and sustainably **resourced**
- include mechanisms for **co-design and participation** of First Nations peoples and other negatively racialised communities

- set **measurable targets**
- identify how the Framework **interacts** with other national frameworks, agreements and plans
- include **public reporting** at regular intervals

## NATIONAL ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE

- **oversees and advises** on the implementation of the National Anti-Racism Framework
- **co-chaired** by the Race Discrimination Commissioner and a Secretary (representing the Australian Government's Secretaries Board)
- with **senior government membership** from across federal, state and territory jurisdictions, and relevant peak organisations

## National Anti-Racism Framework **First Nations** Implementation Plan

## National Anti-Racism Framework Implementation Plan

## KEY PRIORITY AREAS

Legal protections and reform

Workplaces and employment

Education and public awareness

Justice

Media and the arts

Health

Data

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK (MEL FRAMEWORK)

- AHRC to **co-design** MEL framework with communities that experience racism
- **complement accountability mechanisms** under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- **independently conduct evaluations** informed by First Nations and other negatively racialised communities

## FRAMEWORK SNAPSHOT

- The National Anti-Racism Framework is a roadmap for governments, business and community organisations to eliminate racism in Australia.
- The Framework lists 63 recommendations for reform across Australia's legal and justice system, health, education, workplaces, media and the arts, and in data collection
- The Commission is urging the Federal Government to establish a National Anti-Racism Taskforce to implement the Framework's recommendations.
- The Framework has been developed following three years of extensive consultations with hundreds of diverse community organisations, service providers, government departments and agencies, subject matter experts and relevant community members.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Human rights-based approach (complemented by principles of participation, accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, equality, and empowerment)
- Systemic and whole-of-society scope
- Focus on intersectionality, wellbeing and impact
- Trauma-informed, strengths-based, and place-based (recognising community strength and leadership)
- Collaboration and commitment to an evolving framework in the long term
- Prioritisation of lived experience, First Nations perspectives and cultural safety in decision-making across all sectors
- Enhancement of racial literacy across all sectors
- Centring of storytelling in data collection

### FIND OUT MORE

For more about the National Anti-Racism Framework and to support the vision visit:

[www.humanrights.gov.au/anti-racism-framework](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/anti-racism-framework)

or scan this QR code



### Acknowledgement

*We acknowledge the ongoing strength and leadership of Australia's First Peoples in leading anti-racism efforts since colonisation. The Commission acknowledges the vast emotional and intellectual labour of the community, particularly those with lived experiences of racism, who shared their vision for a National Anti-Racism Framework that takes a transformative approach to addressing racism in Australia.*