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## **ECCV Submission regarding the National Anti- Racism Partnership and Strategy**

**May 2012**

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) welcomes the opportunity to present this submission regarding the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy.

The ECCV is the statewide peak advocacy body representing ethno-specific agencies and multicultural organisations. For over 30 years ECCV has remained the principal liaison point between ethnic communities, government and the wider community in Victoria. ECCV has been a key player in building Victoria as a successful, harmonious and multicultural society.

The ECCV membership consists of more than 200 organisations that represent groups with an ethnic or multicultural focus, organisations with an interest in these areas, or individuals who support ECCV. The majority of those members are not-for-profit community service organisations. They provide services in areas such as aged care, migration, discrimination, community harmony, employment, education and training, health and community services, law and justice, as well as the arts and culture.

### **Question 1:**

**What can we learn from how Australia has dealt with racism in the past? What achievements should we build on? What mistakes should we learn from?**

Australia has come a very long way from the days of the White Australia Policy and the assimilationist immigration approaches that followed it. That said, it is important that we do not forget these mistakes, or underestimate the affects that they have had on Australian society and identity.

We must learn from the damage wrought by these policies and must be sure that Australians are, and continue to be, aware of the problems they caused. Much of the blame for the often narrow conceptions of what and who is 'Australian' can be attributed to these policies. Under the White Australia Policy, a very select group of people were given permission to consider themselves and be known as Australians. Under assimilationist approaches, immigrants to Australia were asked to curb and conceal their cultural and linguistic differences, in order to conform to the Anglo norms that had been accepted as Australian culture. The result of all of this is that, even

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today, non-Anglo Australians, regardless of the amount of time they may have been part of this country's story, are not always regarded as Australians and may not readily identify themselves as such. The discriminatory policies of Australia's past have left us a damaging legacy and this continues to rob many Australians of their rightful sense of belonging and acceptance.

It would be a mistake to assume that assimilationist values have been completely abandoned. There is much evidence to suggest that a substantial part of the Australian citizenry are still inclined towards assimilationist views and do not wholeheartedly accept the value of multiculturalism.<sup>1</sup> This indicates that many of us have yet to learn the lessons from this period and do not understand the negative and enduring impact such policies and attitudes have had on many of our fellow-Australians.

From our nation's past we must also remember and learn from the racially motivated injustices that have been perpetrated against our nation's first people. Australians must, from this painful past, learn to recognise the dangers of racism. Too many Australians remain under-informed, or misinformed regarding indigenous history and current indigenous issues. As an organisation that represents immigrant and refugee groups, the ECCV feel that specialist agencies and indigenous people are in the best position to make recommendations on how this situation can be improved. With that said, the ECCV recognise that public misperceptions and a lack of education must be addressed, in order to foster greater understanding of and compassion towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (see Recommendations 10 & 11).

If we are to address racism, we must acknowledge it. In the past, many of Australia's political leaders have been reluctant to recognise the existence of racism in this country. It has been noted that 'racism denial' was demonstrated by the many political leaders who sought to play down the racist motivations of those who rioted in Cronulla in 2005 and those who perpetrated violent attacks against Indian international students in 2009-2010.<sup>2</sup> This failure to recognise racism has an undermining effect on those who experience it and are witness to it. Denial makes their concerns and experiences invisible. The National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy is welcomed by the ECCV as an indication that the Australian Government is prepared to take the step of acknowledging the racism that exists in Australia and recognising the corrosive effects it has on social cohesion and quality of life in our communities.

Despite indications of racism denial at the political level, it would seem that the general community are fairly willing to accept that it occurs in our communities. This was illustrated by in the *Challenging Racism Project*, in which 85 per cent of respondents agreed (many strongly agreeing) that racial prejudice exists in Australia. Despite this acceptance, it was also found that many respondents (41.5%) were

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<sup>1</sup> Dunn, K. & Forrest J., (2010), 'Attitudes to Multicultural Values in Diverse Spaces in Australia's Immigrant Cities: Sydney and Melbourne', *Space and Polity*, Routledge, Vol. 14, No. 1, : 82

<sup>2</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K., (2011), 'Challenging the Public Denial of Racism for a Deeper Multiculturalism', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 32:6: 589



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not willing to acknowledge the existence of Anglo privilege in Australia.<sup>3</sup> This incongruity in views has been described as representing a “situation in which people are prepared to acknowledge that there is racism ‘out there in the society’ but...less ready to acknowledge that there are winners and losers from this racism, and...especially reluctant to acknowledge cultural privilege.<sup>4</sup> Along with an acceptance of the presence of racism must come an acknowledgement of the unequal privilege that is enjoyed by certain groups in our country. Australians often talk about the concept of a ‘fair-go’. While we do not wish imply that our commitment to this philosophy is disingenuous, what is often underestimated is the uneven nature of the playing-field, which can make it more difficult for some people to have a go at all. A deeper multiculturalism requires a robust challenge to racism and privilege, and official acknowledgement of those social pathologies.<sup>5</sup>

**The ECCV Recommend:**

1. That the National Anti-Racism Strategy include a public and school-based education campaign featuring ‘Lessons from our Past’ , aiming to encourage support for multiculturalism by highlighting the negative social and personal impacts of previous policies and celebrating the healing and progressive potential of Australian multiculturalism.
2. The National Anti-Racism Strategy include a public and school-based education campaign that addresses common misperceptions and misinformation related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrates the immense wisdom and cultural contribution of the world’s oldest surviving cultures.
3. Political leaders take the lead in acknowledging racism and unfair privilege in Australia.

**Question 2:**

**What information would be useful to include in a campaign to prevent and reduce racism?**

It has been observed that political support for anti-multicultural parties in Australia tends to be greatest in areas of socioeconomic hardship, where residents feel an acute sense of conflict for scarce urban

<sup>3</sup> Consolidated National Attitudes and Experiences Survey, Challenging Racism Project 2001-2008, as cited in ,<sup>3</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K., (2011): 594

<sup>4</sup> Dunn, K.M., Forrest, J., Burnley, I. and McDonald, A., (2004). ‘Constructing Racism in Australia’, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 39 (4), 409-430, as cited in Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K. (2011): 593-595

<sup>5</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K. (2011): 589

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resources (housing, jobs, social welfare and charity).<sup>6</sup> It must also be considered that “[a]ny attempt to reduce prejudice and racism is likely to encounter resistance if sections of the community stand to lose something, or believe that they stand to lose something.”<sup>7</sup> At present, it is likely that not all Australian’s consider anti-racism to be beneficial, or worthy of community time and resources.<sup>8</sup>

In light of this, the ECCV submit that campaigns to prevent and reduce racism should include information highlighting the economic and social benefits of immigration and multiculturalism. This may go some way in assuaging the resource related fears that often drive racist attitudes. It has been well noted that racism is “socially disruptive, destabilises good community relations, social cohesion, and national unity...and decreases productivity”.<sup>9</sup> As such, all Australian’s stand to benefit from the National Anti-Racism Strategy, however many will need support in order to recognise this. It is therefore vital that the information provided and promoted via the National Anti-Racism Strategy emphasises the wide-ranging destructiveness of racism and the benefits of social harmony and diversity.

As already indicated, in order to address racism, we must acknowledge it.<sup>10</sup> However, it would appear that targets, bystanders and perpetrators often lack the knowledge that is required to identify various forms of racism. Although some forms of racism, are very overt, explicit and thus easily identifiable, there are a range of racist attitudes and behaviours which are more subtle and, in some cases, may be enacted without racist intentions. These forms of racism, which may include systemic racism, are more difficult to identify, prove, acknowledge and redress. The National Anti-Racism Strategy should provide enhanced public education and accessible information regarding the different forms of racism that individuals might experience or perpetrate.

It is also important that the National Anti-Racism Strategy seek to eliminate false beliefs by providing accurate information.<sup>11</sup> De-bunking myths and delegitimising stereotypes that have formed around certain groups is essential in order to enhance understanding, unity and empathy between groups. The *See Beyond Race* community awareness campaign that is part of the Locations Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) program in Victoria has demonstrated this principle at work. This campaign has shown that educational advertising can be a very powerful medium for getting accurate and positive messages across and shifting community

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<sup>6</sup> Davis R., Stimson R., (1998), 'Disillusionment and Disenchantment at the Fringe: Explaining the Geography of the One Nation Party Vote at the Queensland Election', *People and Place*, 6, pp. 69–82., as cited in Dunn, K. & Forrest J., (2010): 84

<sup>7</sup> Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003), *Anti-Racism - What Works? An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Anti-Racism Strategies*, Centre for Social Change & Social Equity, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia:7

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Allbrook M. R., (2001), *Strategies for Change: Anti-racism Initiatives from Australia, Canada, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom*. Perth, Western Australia: The Office of Citizenship and Multicultural Interests: 11, as cited in, Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003): 7

<sup>10</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K., (2011):588

<sup>11</sup> Pedersen A, Walker I, Rapley M, Wise M, (2003): 4



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views. The ECCV submit that more work remains to be done in this area and that the *See Beyond Race* project should be enhanced and extended.

Public education campaigns should also aim to have Australians, of all walks of life, question the way they view themselves and how they would like to be viewed by others. Information about Australia's strong history of acting as a safe-haven and good home to millions of immigrants may work to develop pride around inclusive values. Personal stories of immigrant families and their subsequent generations may be particularly effective for this purpose, as would the stories of the good neighbours and community leaders who helped people make Australia their home. Advertising and information that highlights the fair, just and progressive nature of Australia and equates being a 'real Australian' with these qualities, rather than with one's ethnic heritage, could also be very powerful.

It needs to be considered that appeals to fairness and egalitarianism, as described above, could have unintended consequences and, without due caution, may act to increase hostility between groups. For example, individuals may respond by asking why, if all Australians are equal, are refugee groups able to access specific services and supports. The distinction between 'equality' and 'justice' is not always well understood. When implementing anti-racist strategies, it is important to highlight that, without a level playing field it may be unjust to treat all people equally. It is vital that public campaigns provide broader context regarding the challenges that face many Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Australians.

Many people seek to justify their racist views by pointing to examples of undesirable behaviour they may have seen carried out by individuals from certain ethnicities. This brand of justification can be hard to counter, as it is often based on personal experiences. What needs to be altered though is the perception of those who have had, or hear about such experiences. The information provided by the National Anti-Racism Strategy should inform and remind Australians that undesirable behaviour is not determined by ethnicity, rather, it may be the result of a variety of things, including rejection, marginalization, anger, frustration or, quite simply, individual disposition. Similarly, the National Anti-Racism Strategy should seek to highlight the diversity that exists within ethnic groups, which makes it irrational to correlate the behaviour of one individual, or subgroup, to the ethnic group.

From a human rights perspective, it is important that, while highlighting the benefits of Australia's cultural diversity, the information and awareness campaigns initiated as part of the National Anti-Racism Strategy, also highlight cross-cultural similarities. While information that highlights similarities must veer away from assimilationist discourses that celebrate sameness, Australians could be made better aware of the fact that, despite our differences, we have shared experiences, concerns and joys. There is a sense of connection to be found in the fact that we all live together harmoniously in this country and that we are all party to the human experience, along with all the happiness and sadness that this can

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bring. Emphasising the commonalities that exist within our diversity can be a valuable aid in building empathy and joint purposes.

The ECCV would like to emphasise the importance of information that is accessible in community languages and in a variety of formats. This is essential in order to reduce languages and literacy barriers.

**The ECCV recommend that the National Anti-Racism Strategy:**

4. Include information about the different forms of racism that one may encounter, or perpetrate. This should include public education, organisational and workplace training and school-based programs.
5. Include public education and information regarding the significant social and economic value of immigration and multiculturalism. This needs to include information regarding the damaging effects of racism on our society and economy.
6. Enhance and expand public education and advertising campaigns that confront negative racial stereotypes. This should include measures to highlight the diversity that exists within ethnic groups.
7. Highlight the fair and progressive nature of Australia and explain the need for special programs and measures that ensure equality for all Australians.
8. Include public education and information that represents the unity that exists within our diversity by highlighting our shared Australian and human experiences.
9. Ensure that all information provided can be accessed in community languages and in a variety of formats.

**Question 3:**

**How could we better acknowledge the contributions to Australia of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse communities?**

The ECCV's broad membership is made up of groups and organisations representing people who have come to Australia as immigrants and refugees. As such, those with specialist knowledge regarding Indigenous issues and communities would be better placed to make appropriate recommendations concerning suitable ways to acknowledge the unique history and contributions of indigenous people.

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With that said, the ECCV submit that, in order that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may be duly acknowledged, a narrative that recognises the special status of Australia's First Peoples should be included in the Preamble of the Australian Constitution. Without this vital recognition the culture of our first people will not be duly valued and will remain neglected by the Australian people's supreme and most defining document.

It has been observed that racism towards Indigenous Australians is present within Australia's CALD communities.<sup>12</sup> For example, a survey on the issue of prejudice against Indigenous Australians returned participant comments such as:

*"I am an immigrant. Came here with nothing and was able to get an education and a decent job. If I can do it in a country who's [sic] language I could not speak then anyone can do it. If aboriginal people wanted to get ahead then they would have done it. Everyone should be treated EQUALLY no matter of colour or race".<sup>13</sup>*

Comments such as these demonstrate a lack of understanding regarding the broader context of dispossession and racism experienced by Indigenous people.

ECCV has focussed much attention in its forums and advocacy papers on developing a positive sense of belonging and identity. We found through our stakeholder engagement that people in many CALD communities have a deep appreciation and understanding of belonging to place; to land and water. We feel these concepts of identity and belonging are an appropriate point of contact to enhance relationships between Australia's Indigenous Communities and its diverse migrant groups.

In light of the above, the ECCV recommends an education and awareness raising program, targeted at CALD communities. This should aim to build community knowledge regarding the history and current challenges of Australia's First Peoples. With enhanced support, local multicultural and ethno-specific groups could work with Indigenous representatives and organisations in order to facilitate this process. Ideally, this would include cross-cultural interactions, community visits, joint projects and information sessions. It would also be advisable to enhance the information that is provided to those arriving in Australia, in order that they may have better understanding of Australian Indigenous culture and history.

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<sup>12</sup> Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003):12

<sup>13</sup> Waller, J. C., Mansell, T. K., Koh, K. J., Raja, M., & Pedersen, A. (2001). *Unpublished data file*. Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, as cited in, Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003):12



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**The ECCV recommend:**

10. That the Federal Government moves to amend the Australian Constitution, in order to recognise Australia's First Peoples.
11. That the National Anti-Racism Strategy includes provisions for CALD community specific education programs and partnership projects aimed at building community knowledge regarding Australian Indigenous culture and history.

**Question 4:**

**What are the priority areas in which we should be addressing racism (for example: employment, education, sport, the media, cyber-racism?)**

The ECCV submit that anti-racism requires a whole of community approach. In light of this, all the priority areas identified above represent suitable sites and mediums for addressing racism.

Racism takes many forms and requires site-specific responses. This means that community groups need to be consulted in order to ascertain the types of racism being encountered and the most appropriate ways for this to be addressed. It is likely that priority areas and appropriate responses will vary from group to group and from location to location. The Darebin City Council in Victoria provides a good model for this practice. Darebin City's wide-ranging, multi-strategy, community-specific *Racism Inquiry* provided those living and involved in the local community with several opportunities and methods to provide feedback regarding their experiences and views of racism. Participants were also asked to suggest solutions. This information will be used in the development of a *Darebin Anti-Racism Strategy*, which will aim to address all forms of racial discrimination.<sup>14</sup>

It warrants mentioning that, within recent months, the ECCV has consulted with a variety of stakeholders and has received expressions of concern regarding racism in three particular areas.

The first area, employment, has already been identified in the list provided. Given the growing concern among our membership regarding discrimination and racism in this area (as well as the need for improved supports and opportunities), the ECCV Executive Committee has convened a new Workforce Participation Policy Subcommittee. Some of the concerns and anecdotes expressed to the ECCV include:

<sup>14</sup> *Darebin City Council Racism Inquiry Report*, (2012), City Of Darebin. Available: [http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Files/Item\\_8.11\\_Appendix\\_A\\_-\\_Draft\\_Racism\\_Inquiry\\_Report.pdf](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Files/Item_8.11_Appendix_A_-_Draft_Racism_Inquiry_Report.pdf)  
Accessed: 10/05/2012

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- CALD individuals receiving better responses to job applications after anglicising their names. In one case known to the ECCV, young man of African background submitted identical applications for a government position. On the first application he used his real name and he received a very quick rejection notice. On the second application he anglicised his name and was short listed and interviewed for the position.
- Cases of CALD workers being passed over for promotions and other opportunities in the workplace, despite equal (and at times superior) qualifications and time with employer
- Experiences of workplace bullying that are specifically related to culture, religion and ethnicity. Those experiencing this type of racist harassment report that they are unsure how, or where to report incidents and fear losing their jobs, or angering their co-workers or employer by complaining.
- Increasing concern over the lack of diversity in the public sector, at all levels.

The ECCV has also been made aware of growing concern regarding racism among members of the Victoria Police. For instance, recent research<sup>15</sup> has observed a lack of trust between members of the Victorian police force and members of particular CALD communities. For those in CALD communities, mistrust in police can be the result of experiences of authoritarian regimes, compromised rule of law and corruption in their country of origin. Police may not always be aware of these complexities, or able to understand and react to the resultant behaviour.

Many people in CALD communities describe experiences of being over-policed and racially targeted by police in Victoria. Many, particularly young people from new and emerging communities claim to have experienced aggression and violence from the police. This produces a lack of confidence that can result in the underreporting of crime, and a reluctance to engage with police.

We wish to highlight the importance of the Multicultural Advisory Unit of the Victoria Police, as a trust building mechanism. Due to the positive feedback we have received from some of our constituents, we recommend that the Victorian Government provide the resources necessary to continue the projects associated with this unit. That said, we need also to consider and investigate the issues that are emerging around some community policing activities.

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<sup>15</sup> Dolic, Z., (2011), *Race or Reason? Police Encounters with Young People in the Flemington Region and Surrounding Areas*, A Report Prepared for the Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre. See also: Smith, B., Davy G., (2012), *Safe Spaces: A Toolkit for Dealing with Police/Youth Conflict*, Springvale Monash Legal Service Inc. & Western Suburbs Legal Service Inc., Melbourne. Available: <http://www.smls.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Safe-Spaces.pdf> Accessed: 10/05/2012.



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These include:

- Police control over community policing projects, that is to say, what is done and who can be involved.
- Cultural stereotyping.
- Increased concentration on and over-policing of young people.
- Lack of acknowledgement of power imbalances between police and young people.
- The misperception that individual officers can create cultural change within such a large organisation.
- Increased distrust due to police attempting to gather intelligence during community police activities.

In research on relationships between police and young CALD people, the Springvale Monash Legal Service, the Western Suburbs Legal Service and the Flemington- Kensington Community Legal Centre explore these issues and put a strong case for alternative responses. These include reducing police discretion and increasing police training and accountability. A position we support.

It has also come to our attention that many CALD Victorians are experiencing racism in the housing and rental market and would recommend that this also be considered a priority area for the National Anti-Racism Strategy. The Footscray Community Legal Centre (FCLC) recently published a report presenting the findings from their Refugee Tenancy and Housing Project. This project included a legal tenancy clinic, providing free advice and representation to people from refugee backgrounds. Community legal education and community development initiatives were also undertaken. The refugee tenancy clinic provided 241 advices and opened 88 files on behalf of clients during the 18 month duration of the project.<sup>16</sup> Although this project concentrated on a specific area in Melbourne's West, there is much to suggest that the experiences described therein would be applicable to many other locations throughout the state, and indeed the country. Although the report highlights numerous serious concerns, of most relevance to this submission is the finding that many real estate agents displayed negative attitudes towards tenants with refugee backgrounds. As is noted in the report:

*Real estate agents often used the language of "those people" to differentiate refugee tenants from "normal" tenants and to reference prior negative experiences with tenants of shared ethnic or cultural backgrounds<sup>17</sup>*

In addition to the above, real estate agents (who managed some 75 per cent of the FCLC's client's properties) also frequently expressed views that refugee clients were prone to defaulting on payments,

<sup>16</sup> Berta, L., (2012), *Making it Home: Refugee Housing in Melbourne's West*, Footscray Community Legal Centre Inc., Melbourne: 11

<sup>17</sup> Op. cit: 56

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were dirty and likely to damage properties and tended to have family members living with them, without their landlord's consent.<sup>18</sup>

The clients who attended the clinic presented matters which raised serious concerns about the conduct of real estate agents, which included issues around trust account money, discrimination, eviction threats and illegal rent increases.<sup>19</sup> Clients also reported serious communication difficulties when dealing with real estate agents. It was noted that some problems were the result of mutual misunderstandings, or the client's lack of familiarity with Australian processes. It was also noted that, "[a]t times, the misunderstandings appeared to arise from opportunism or a degree of dishonesty on the part of the real estate agent".<sup>20</sup>

In addition to this, none of the clinic's clients reported using an interpreter when communicating with their real estate agent. This is despite the fact that selected real estate agencies have access to free telephone interpreting services and that the number of agencies with such access has recently been expanded. When real estate agents were questioned on this point, they responded that using telephone interpreters took too long, that the client was only pretending not to understand English, or that they considered a child, family, or community member with basic English to be sufficient, insofar as interpreting is concerned.<sup>21</sup>

Although the FCLC acknowledged that not all agents behaved in such a manner, or expressed such views, the fact that this occurs at all should be of great concern to those involved in the National Anti-Racism Partnership.

Housing and employment are priority areas for those seeking to build a new life in Australia. As such, these should also be seen as priority areas for any anti-racism strategy.

More specific information on how the media, the education system and sports organisations can reduce and prevent racism can be found in the responses to questions six and seven.

**The ECCV recommend:**

- 12.** That the National Anti-Racism Strategy Include in-depth local and site specific consultations and measures to address racism. This should include consultations regarding racism and discrimination in the workplace and the labour market.
- 13.** That the Victorian Government provide the resources necessary to continue the projects associated with the Victoria Police Multicultural Advisory Unit.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Op.cit:58

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

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**The ECCV also support the recommendations made by the organisations below and ask that those involved in the development of the National Anti-Racism Strategy:**

14. Consider the recommendations that have been made by Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre in the 2011 report *Race or Reason? Police Encounters with Young People in the Flemington Region and Surrounding Areas*.<sup>22</sup>
15. Consider the recommendations that have been made by the Springvale Monash Legal Service and the Western Suburbs Legal Service in the 2012 report *Safe Spaces: A Toolkit for Dealing with Police/Youth Conflict*.<sup>23</sup>
16. Consider the recommendations that have been made by the Footscray Community Legal Centre in the 2012 report: *Making it Home: Refugee Housing in Melbourne's West*.<sup>24</sup>

**Question 5:**

**What measures should governments at all levels take to address racism?**

As previously mentioned, it is essential that governments at all levels acknowledge the existence of racism and demonstrate a bi-partisan, unwavering commitment to addressing racism, in the interests of all Australians (see Recommendation 3). This includes demonstrating recognition and respect for the needs, concerns and achievements of Australia's First People.

Local governments should be proactive in canvassing and addressing the concerns of local populations in a site-specific manner, as demonstrated by the Darebin City Council. They can also work with and support local ethnic and other organisations to educate and facilitate programs aimed at preventing and reducing racism in local communities.

Local, State and Federal governments are well placed to resource and support anti-racism work in local communities, in education, the arts, sports and recreation, places of work, in the media and other locations, in order to support whole-of-community responses to racism and discrimination.

Governments at all levels should act to monitor, evaluate and improve standards of access and equity. This will help to ensure that that Australians from diverse backgrounds are not discriminated against in the services they can access and are treated in a culturally

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<sup>22</sup> Dolic, Z., (2011).

<sup>23</sup> Smith, B., Davy G., (2012).

<sup>24</sup> Berta, L., (2012).



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appropriate manner. This is a crucial element in creating a sense of belonging and support within CALD communities.

Governments at all levels should also be proactive in ensuring that their workforces reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Australian community. Analyses of minority employment in the public sector, at all levels, show the over-representation of Anglo-Australians and the under-representation of other groups.<sup>25</sup>

The ECCV submit that those working in government departments and government supported agencies should be required to undertake cultural competence training and (for those in applicable positions) inclusive recruitment and management practice training.

**The ECCV recommend:**

17. That local governments undertake to consult with community members to ensure that their anti-racism strategies are appropriate and well-targeted.
18. That governments at all levels work to support and resource anti-racism work in local communities, public services, education, the arts, sports and recreation, places of work, in the media and other locations, in order to support whole-of-community responses to racism and discrimination.
19. That governments at all levels act to monitor, evaluate and improve standards of access and equity.
20. That governments at all levels take proactive measures to ensure that their workforce reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Australian community.
21. That Staff in government departments and government supported agencies be required to undertake cultural competence training and (for those in applicable positions) inclusive recruitment and management practice training.

**Question 6:**

**What role can business, the arts, sporting organisations, community groups, service organisations and the media play in addressing racism?**

All of the groups mentioned above have a role to play in anti-racism, as racism exists across our communities and thus requires whole-of-community responses. To be effective anti-racism strategies should be undertaken in an ongoing manner and involve simultaneous and complimentary actions across all community locations.

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<sup>25</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, Australian Public Service Commission (2010), as cited in, <sup>25</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K. (2011):588



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As Carrillo Ganter has noted, the arts provide us with “a universal language that enables us to understand and empathise with each other at a time when there is so much conflict and division between cultures and people”.<sup>26</sup> The ECCV support Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) in their view that “the arts are most powerful mediums through which to foster a more socially cohesive and harmonious community”.<sup>27</sup> Victoria is one of the most culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities in the world. Despite this, a recent Needs Analysis, conducted by MAV found that many artists and communities felt that multicultural art “remains a peripheral area in terms of policy, funding and resourcing”.<sup>28</sup> If the diversity of 21st century Australia is to be truly represented, multicultural arts need to be specifically resourced and promoted. This includes targeted support for emerging artists and community projects. Improved resourcing to the multicultural arts sector will not only improve access and participation on behalf of CALD artists and communities, it will also permit a more representative and diverse array of cultural events and art forms and facilitate cross-cultural projects. It would appear that this is something keenly sought by Australians. According to the recent *Australians and the Arts* report, “67% of Australians would feel more positive about the arts if there were more multicultural events and activities”.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to measures that can be taken to expand multicultural arts and foster cross-cultural interaction and expression, the ECCV would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the recommendations made via our 2011 submission regarding the proposed National Cultural Policy.<sup>30</sup>

Sporting organisations have an important role to play in anti-racism. This extends to the professional level where a zero-tolerance approach should be taken to sportspeople (very often held as role models) who engage in racist behaviour. High-profile sports people can be very powerful actors against racism and should fulfil this role through anti-racism campaigns and through their interactions with others, on and off the field.

The ECCV has conducted sector consultation on this matter and has received feedback indicating that sporting clubs, associations, matches and competitions are sites where racist attitudes and tensions can, and often do, get played out. Racism can occur both on and off the field. It may come from spectators, players from opposing teams and referees; it can exist within clubs, and in governing bodies. In this environment racism may be overt, including name calling, double standards, and discrimination. It can also be

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<sup>26</sup> Clarkson, P., 2011, *Giving Voice: A History of Multicultural Arts Victoria*, Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, Melbourne: XI

<sup>27</sup> Op.cit 121

<sup>28</sup> Multicultural Arts Victorian & The Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2005, *The Way Forward: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Community Needs Analysis in the Arts*, Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV), Melbourne: iii

<sup>29</sup> Op.cit: 3

<sup>30</sup> Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV), (October 2011), *Submission regarding the Proposed National Cultural Policy*. Available:

[http://www.eccv.org.au/library/media/ECCV\\_2011\\_National\\_Cultural\\_Policy\\_Submission.pdf](http://www.eccv.org.au/library/media/ECCV_2011_National_Cultural_Policy_Submission.pdf)



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more subtle and include the passing over of players from a particular background.

Those who seek to harness the anti-racism potential of sporting organisations have observed the following:

- That organisations need to have a system for reporting racism, whereby players, coaches and teams may be reported and have consequences imposed for racist behaviour.
- That sporting clubs need to be held to greater account concerning the conduct and language of their supporters. It is argued that, if a club is fined or disciplined for the racist comments and behaviours of supporters, they will develop ways of improving behaviour and promoting better behaviour.
- That tribunals require a mechanism whereby greater consideration can be given to the racist taunts that sometimes provoke bad behaviour – Although players need to be responsible for their actions in responding to racism, this would lead to greater understanding of the negative effects of racism in sport.

The ECCV has conducted in-depth research on the role of sport in creating positive, intercultural relationships and connections, as well as a sense of shared belonging and purpose among participants. In this regard the ECCV would like to draw attention to our research paper *Multicultural Youth Engagement...In Sport*<sup>31</sup> and to reinforce the recommendations made therein, which focus on the steps that can be taken to overcome racism in sport and to reduce the barriers that exist for sportspeople from CALD communities.

The media also has a role to play in discrediting racist stereotypes and promoting better understanding. It has been observed that the media has an “almost-structural effect”<sup>32</sup> on public opinions and perceptions. In addition to this, it has also been pointed out that “Media analyses have consistently shown that ethnic minorities are routinely misrepresented and under-represented in mainstream media”.<sup>33</sup> In the interests of anti-racism, this should not be allowed to continue. Media producers should be called upon to adequately represent Australia’s diversity, both in personnel and programing. Claims of racism and defamation by the media should always be thoroughly investigated. Media producers and personalities should also be held to greater account if they are found to have misrepresented or defamed any ethnic group. Media organisations

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<sup>31</sup> Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV), (2010), *Multicultural Youth Engagement...In Sport*. ECCV, Carlton, Victoria. Available at:

[http://www.eccv.org.au/library/file/policy/Final\\_Document\\_-\\_Multicultural\\_Youth\\_Engagement\\_In\\_Sport\\_-\\_Dec\\_2010\\_-\\_DE.pdf](http://www.eccv.org.au/library/file/policy/Final_Document_-_Multicultural_Youth_Engagement_In_Sport_-_Dec_2010_-_DE.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Dunn, K. & Forrest J., (2010): 99-100

<sup>33</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K. (2011): 588



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can also be involved in the National Anti-Racism Strategy and are vital partners for the production and broadcasting of public education media campaigns. It is recommended that, as part of the National Anti-Racism Strategy, media and multicultural groups be encouraged and supported to work together in order to create representative and positive messages regarding Australian's diversity.

As the peak body representing hundreds of ethno-specific and multicultural community groups across Victoria, the ECCV is keenly aware of the important role local community associations can play in the National Anti-Racism strategy. This is discussed in greater detail with relation to question nine of this submission.

**The ECCV recommend:**

22. That those involved in the development of the National Anti-Racism Strategy consider the recommendations made by the ECCV in our 2011 submission to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet regarding the proposed National Cultural policy (attached).
23. That those involved in the development of the National Anti-Racism Strategy consider the recommendations made by the ECCV via the research paper *Multicultural Youth Engagement...In Sport* (attached).
24. That the National Anti-Racism Strategy include measures to ensure that racism is treated with zero-tolerance in all professional codes and that professional sports clubs and players participate in public campaigns against racism in sport and in communities.
25. That the National Anti-Racism Strategy involve measures that will hold media producers and personalities to account for racism and defamation
26. That the National Anti-Racism Strategy involve strong partnerships between multicultural groups and media organisations, allowing for collaboration on positive, representative messages and public education campaigns.

**Question 7:**

**How can we involve young people in addressing racism?**

One of the best places to engage young people around issues of racism is in schools. Schools are a place of great influence on students and the surrounding community; they are therefore well placed in terms of anti-racism strategies.

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School is also the place where many young people experience, witness and participate in racist acts and speech. Recently, a nationwide survey of 823 secondary school students revealed that some 75 per cent students had been exposed to or involved in racism. Of those who had experienced racism 66.7 per cent indicated that this had occurred at school.<sup>34</sup> The survey also revealed that 80 per cent of students from non-Anglo Australian backgrounds reported being subjected to racism; while 54.6 per cent of those from Anglo-Australian backgrounds reported that they had experienced racism.<sup>35</sup> In addition to this, the survey demonstrated that students born outside of Australia were five to six times more likely to have experienced racism.<sup>36</sup>

It would appear that students from refugee backgrounds are common targets of racism in schools. The Refugee Health Research Centre interviewed 88 young people with refugee backgrounds and found that nine per cent experienced racism during their first year in an Australian school.<sup>37</sup> By the end of a student's second year in an Australian school, they were over two times as likely to have experienced racism, with 20 per cent of respondents reporting that they had been subjected to it.<sup>38</sup> It is important to note that students also report experiencing racism from teachers and other school staff<sup>39</sup>

In a recent review of strategies and resources to address race-based discrimination and support diversity in schools, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) puts forth the following guiding principles for future efforts to reduce racism and support diversity in Australian schools.<sup>40</sup> These guiding principles advise that school-based programs be:

- multi-level
- multi-strategy
- integrated and long-term
- based on sound psychological, sociological and/or educational theory
- matched to the social-cognitive skills of participants
- appropriate for the ethno-racial composition of the school
- include adequate teacher training.

The ECCV support these guiding principles and would like to highlight the importance of the multi-level, whole-of-school approach advocated in VicHealth's review.

<sup>34</sup> Mansouri et al. (2009), *The Impact of Racism Upon the Health and Wellbeing of Young Australians*, Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne:7, as cited in, Centre for Multicultural Youth, (June 2010), *Resources for Responding to Racism in Schools: Information Sheet*, Available:

<http://www.cmy.net.au/Assets/1445/2/ResourcesforRespondingtoRacismInSchools.pdf>

Accessed: 08/05/2012

<sup>35</sup> ibid

<sup>36</sup> ibid

<sup>37</sup> Refugee Health Research Centre, (2007), *Good Starts for Refugee Youth: Experience of discrimination among refugee youth in Melbourne*, Broadsheet # 4, November, viewed 2 May 2010 at [www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc/documents/broadsheet-4.pdf](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc/documents/broadsheet-4.pdf), as cited in, ibid

<sup>38</sup> ibid

<sup>39</sup> Mansouri, F. and Trembath, A. (2005) 'Multicultural education and racism: The case of Arab-Australian students in contemporary Australia' *International Education Journal*, 6(4), 516-529, as cited in, ibid

<sup>40</sup> Greco T, Priest N, & Paradies Y (2010): *Review of Strategies and Resources to Address Race-Based Discrimination and Support Diversity in Schools*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), Carlton, Australia:14

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A whole-of-school approach is most likely to be effective in countering racist attitudes and supporting diversity. As indicated by VicHealth<sup>41</sup>, this should include action across the following levels:

- school policies and guidelines
- curriculum and pedagogy
- training and development
- student support and development
- parent and community involvement
- monitoring and reporting of student performance and race-based discrimination.

As also pointed out by VicHealth,

*While such multi-level approaches to address race-based discrimination and support diversity in schools are advocated within both research and practice, few such comprehensive approaches are available within the empirical literature. Rather, reported strategies are predominantly single level, mostly curriculum and pedagogical approaches.<sup>42</sup>*

The ECCV support the whole-of-school approach described above and submit that the National Anti-Racism Partnership should support and resource anti-racism practices employing the above guiding principles and using this multi-level approach.

Once again, interventions and on-going programs will be more effective if they take into account and respond to the particular issues, groupings and concerns of those who make up the school. One-size-fits-all approaches are not appropriate and will be less likely to gain interest and yield results.

The ECCV also advises that anti-racism programs are more likely to have effect if they allow those involved to engage in open dialogue, with one another, regarding their experiences and their concerns. The American based *Challenge Day*, a not-for-profit organisation, provides a good model for workshops aimed at facilitating open dialogue and for building understanding, relationships and empathy between diverse groups of secondary school students.<sup>43</sup> Despite the short-term implication of the name, the *Challenge Day* model could be incorporated into long-term/ongoing anti-racism programs.

Another good model for youth related anti-racism is the Victorian Arabic Social Services' (VASS) *We Are One* project. This project ran at VASS between November 2009 and November 2011. The project aimed to “

*[A]ddress the negative contributions of disempowerment, anger, helplessness and frustration within the Muslim Arabic Speaking Background (ASB) communities within schools in*

<sup>41</sup> Greco T, Priest N, & Paradies Y (2010):19

<sup>42</sup> Greco T, Priest N, & Paradies Y (2010):19

<sup>43</sup> For more information visit: <http://www.challengeday.org/index.php>

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*the Northern and Western Regions of Melbourne and within  
the broader community.*<sup>44</sup>

The project also sought to “bridge the cultural divide between new and established migrant communities and the broader Australian community”<sup>45</sup>. In order to do this the project worked to “enhance community capacity building using workshops, mentoring activities, youth forums and school-community partnerships”<sup>46</sup>. Seven local secondary schools participated in the program. The range of activities and outcomes achieved via the project are too numerous to be given due recognition here, though a list and more information can be found on the VASS website.<sup>47</sup> The project has produced some highly innovative and effective best practice models and was reviewed internally by VASS and externally through an independent agency.<sup>48</sup>

Young people can also become engaged in anti-racism outside of school and this can become an element of their recreational activities. It is important that this not dominate activities and take away young people’s opportunities for light-hearted fun and socialisation. Once more, a good example of this approach in practice is provided by VASS. The *Anti-Racism Action Band* (A.R.A.B) was originally developed by VASS as a creative outlet for Arabic young people who were experiencing racial vilification following the events of September 11, 2001<sup>49</sup>. As time went on, it became clear to VASS and A.R.A.B members that that “racism, gang culture and discrimination against and between young people in the region was also fuelled by low self-esteem and a lack of creative outlets across all cultural groupings”<sup>50</sup>. As such, A.R.A.B opened its membership to all young people. A.R.A.B currently works with 250 young people from 50 different cultural groups and is described as “a large multi- disciplinary program that works actively to raise self-esteem and confidence, challenge racial tensions and promote social inclusion whilst imparting performance, event management, social and life skills and crucial employment pathways”.<sup>51</sup>

Young people can also benefit from the involvement of sporting organisations, community organisations and arts/creative organisations’ involvement in commitment to anti-racism programs. The potential of such organisations is discussed in more detail with relation to questions six and nine of this submission.

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<sup>44</sup> Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS), *We Are One: Encouraging Peace Building in Schools*. Retrieved from the VASS website, available at: <http://www.vass.org.au/programmes-and-services/youth-services/we-are-one-project/> . Accessed: 07/05/2012

<sup>45</sup> ibid

<sup>46</sup> ibid

<sup>47</sup> see above

<sup>48</sup> ibid

<sup>49</sup> Taken from the Victorian Arabic Social Services’ Anti-Racism Action Band (A.R.A.B) website, available at: <http://arab-vass.com/> , Accessed: 07/05/2012.

<sup>50</sup> ibid

<sup>51</sup> ibid



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**The ECCV recommend that the National Anti-Racism Strategy:**

27. Include school based interventions that are based on the guidelines identified by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.
28. Engage young people in active dialogue around issues of racism and discrimination.
29. Support extra-curricular opportunities, such as those provided by VASS, for engaging young people in anti-racism activities.

**Question 8:**

**Can you give examples of strategies that you have seen used or been part of that have been successful in preventing or reducing racism? Why were they effective?**

Rather than address this question independently, this submission has sought to highlight examples of best practice throughout, as relevant to each question. With that in mind, it is important at this point to highlight some general good practice, as related to anti-racism strategies in a more general sense.

As important as the kinds of information that is provided (discussed under question two), is the manner in which it is disseminated. It has been noted that, when delivering anti-racism messages, care should be taken to “avoid ‘one-way’ communication [as] people are unlikely to engage with the topic if they are not given the opportunity to contribute their views.”<sup>52</sup> This speaks to the need to allow different communities, policy makers and other stakeholders to participate in dialogue on the subject of racism. According to the “*contact hypothesis*”<sup>53</sup>, this kind of interaction can be especially effective when facilitated between groups that have a history of conflict and negative perceptions. According to the model associated with this hypothesis, intergroup contact can reduce tensions between two conflicting groups, though only under the following essential conditions<sup>54</sup>:

- Conflicting groups must have equal status within the contact situation.
- There should be no competition along group lines within the contact situation.
- Groups must seek superordinate goals within the contact situation.

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<sup>52</sup> Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003), *Anti-Racism - What Works? An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Anti-Racism Strategies*, Centre for Social Change & Social Equity, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia: 4

<sup>53</sup> Allport, G., (1954), *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley & Pettigrew, T. F. (1998)., 'Intergroup Contact Theory'. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65-85, as cited in, Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003): 15

<sup>54</sup> Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003):15



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- Relevant institutional authorities must sanction the intergroup contact and must endorse a reduction in intergroup tensions

Local leadership, and the careful management of productive cross-cultural relations, are said to be essential to improved support for multicultural values.<sup>55</sup> Open dialogue, consultation and intergroup communication is an important step for aligning aims and creating better understanding and ownership over anti-racism strategies.

As already indicated, it is important to ensure that the information provided to different communities and groups is well targeted and pitched. Racism takes different forms in different settings and requires site-specific responses.<sup>56</sup> Messages that may resonate with some communities may have little relevance in others and the types of racism encountered may be equally site-specific. In order to understand the types of information that is required in certain areas and contexts, in-depth consultation is required with those concerned (see Recommendation 7).

Research on anti-racism<sup>57</sup> has also revealed that effective strategies:

- Include a coalition of leaders from academia, sport, police, public life etc. who are committed to delivering a consistent message.
- Are supported by clear unambiguous political leadership.
- Are supported by sustained and substantial funding.
- Incorporate long-term plans, rather than one off or short term interventions and programs.

**The ECCV recommend that the National Antiracism Strategy:**

- 30.** Avoid one-way approaches and encourage dialogue and cross-cultural engagement around matters of racism.
- 31.** Plan for and support long term and short term projects and outcomes.
- 32.** Engage community leaders and public figures to support the anti-racism message.
- 33.** Call on governments, at all levels to support and sustain on-going efforts to rid our communities of racism.

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<sup>55</sup> Dunn, K. & Forrest J., (2010): 99

<sup>56</sup> CMYI (2007) *"I'm not racist, but ...": Are we effectively tackling racism and discrimination in schools?* Report from CMYI's Statewide Multicultural Youth Issues (SMYIN) Meeting, CMYI, Melbourne (available at [www.cmyi.net.au/Assets/479/1/RacisminschoolsStatewideReport251007.pdf](http://www.cmyi.net.au/Assets/479/1/RacisminschoolsStatewideReport251007.pdf)) , referring to presentation by Kim Webster, Senior Program Advisor, Mental Health and Wellbeing Unit, VicHealth., as cited in, Centre for Multicultural Youth, (June 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003): 4



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**Question 9:**

**What tools or resources do we have at the community level which could be better utilised in the fight against racism?**

The wide range of ethno-specific and multicultural organisations that work at the community level have the potential to be a great asset to the National Anti-Racism Strategy. As is discussed with relation to question 11, due to lacking knowledge, many targets of racism are impeded in their capacity to recognise and redress it. In some cases, targeted people are reluctant to acknowledge racism due to fears of stigmatising their community, or an unwillingness to see themselves as a victim. Those who experience racism need to be supported and provided with information and support around identifying and redressing racism. Community based ethno-specific and multicultural organisations are already well positioned, connected and trusted sites for culturally competent information provision and capacity building. Unfortunately many such organisations lack the resources needed to facilitate these kinds of important programs.

Similarly, support from these organisations will greatly assist in efforts to address the racism that often exists between and within CALD communities. Though CALD community members are often targets of racism, they can also be perpetrators.

Research on this matter has demonstrated that longer established migrant groups often respond with some disdain towards more recent arrivals from their own origin countries. It has been observed that, in many instances, “[t]he awkwardness and difficulties of the new immigrants are [considered] an embarrassment to the longer established cohorts”<sup>58</sup>

It has also been revealed, via research and surveys, that people from migrant backgrounds may also harbour negative views of refugee communities. For example, one respondent to a recent survey made the following comment regarding refugees:

*“As a migrant some 50 years ago having paid for everything i.e. trip and no handouts [sic]. Sent to the country we did not have the easy side of what is now offered. We had to work and fight to get where we are. Including learning new language and culture”.*<sup>59</sup>

It would appear that views such as this, which indicate that refugees today have it ‘easier’ than other migrant groups, are not uncommon.

As noted with relation to question three, there is also a need for enhanced education in CALD communities, with relation to Indigenous history and issues.

<sup>58</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K., (2011): 590

<sup>59</sup> Attwell, J., Heveli, D., and Pedersen, A. (under review). *Let them stay or send them away? Predictors of negative attitudes toward refugees*, as cited in, Pedersen A., Walker I., Rapley M., Wise M., (2003): 12

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Although CALD groups are likely to benefit from broader myth debunking campaigns, local ethno-specific and multicultural organisations should be considered essential sites for anti-racism programs within CALD communities.

The ethnic media is another important site of representative storytelling, skill procurement and cultural education. Platforms such as these play an important role in maintaining language, culture and identity. They also work to combat racism and stereotypes, by allowing for self-representation between communities. The communicative, independent and creative nature of ethnic media fosters innovation and embraces cultural diversity. The ECCV submit that this a valuable creative industry, one which requires increased and continued government support and resourcing.

**The ECCV recommend:**

- 34.** That the National Anti-Racism Strategy include a commitment, on behalf of government, to provide enhanced resources and support to ethno-specific and multicultural community organisations and to the ethnic media sector. This should be done in recognition of their valuable role in community education and capacity building regarding anti-racism.

**Question 10:**

**How could these experiences be shared to help promote good practice? (For example: a best practice website, clearing house, seeding funding for pilot programs, changing criteria for Government grants programs?).**

ECCV consultation on the above question has revealed that a *mapping exercise* or *stocktake* may be helpful identifying the strategies and programs that have been employed and in evaluating their effectiveness. This would also provide stakeholders with the opportunity to reflect on and share their experiences and recommendations. Stakeholders have also advised that a best practice website and a clearing house on anti-racist information would be very useful for those who can access electronic and printed and/or English language information. For those with access barriers, it may be more appropriate to provide seed funding to mount pilot programs, thus enabling them to develop and strengthen community based anti-racism programs.

There is stakeholder support for changing criteria for government grant programs. Stakeholders commented that the overwhelmingly '*servicist*' approach (e.g. grants for the delivery of settlement and other welfare services by community groups on behalf of governments) is limited and limiting. In addition to this it has been suggested that an explicit criterion requiring that government funded projects contribute in some way to the National Anti-Racism effort

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would enable this important goal to be clearly highlighted and locate it as a key priority.

**The ECCV recommend that the National Anti-Racism Strategy features:**

35. A mapping exercise, or stocktake, to ascertain what has been and is being undertaken in different communities
36. The development of an online anti-racism clearing house and a best practice website, to facilitate partnerships and knowledge sharing.
37. Grant programs that are not overly focused on service delivery, allowing for enhanced resourcing for policy advocacy and research in the area of anti-racism.
38. The inclusion of anti-racism specific criterion for grants provided by the government departments and organisations involved in the National Anti-Racism Partnership.

**Question 11:**

**What strategies or approaches can be used to help individuals and communities who experience racism to speak up or take action? If you have experienced racism, what would have helped you to speak up or take action?**

In order to encourage people to speak up against and report experiences of racism, those who may find themselves as targets must be given information relating to racism and identifying its multiple forms. They must also have ready access to information and support around speaking up and reporting racism and discrimination (see Recommendations 4 and 34 of this submission).

There is much evidence to suggest that minority groups and those most likely to experience racism are, in fact less likely to recognise the occurrence of racism.

The *Challenging Racism Report* noted those born in countries in South Asia or the Middle East were shown to be more likely to deny the existence of racism in Australia than those born in other parts of the world.<sup>60</sup> This occurred despite the fact that Immigrants from those countries are known, from other research, to be targets of racism in Australia. In the case of the *Challenging Racism Report* data, it would appear that enhanced exposure to racism is matched by higher rates of denial.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K., (2011): 595

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*



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There are several ways to explain this incongruity. It is argued that that minority, or target groups, may be reluctant to recognise racism, due to not wanting to be identified as ungrateful complainers, thus reflecting badly on their community.<sup>62</sup> It has also been observed that minority and target groups may deny racism in order to protect their self-esteem. It has is suggested that “[t]he motivation to ignore racism, or re-cast it as something else, may reflect a desire, whether conscious or not, to avoid the personal costs associated with becoming a victim”<sup>63</sup>. It has also been argued that this apparent failure or reluctance to recognise racism “reflects a lack of knowledge of what constitutes racism or indicates that recognition of racism is inhibited.”<sup>64</sup>

The above demonstrates the importance of communicating with minority and target groups, to provide information about what racism is and why it is important that it is acknowledged. Also required is a strong message from community and political leaders that there is no shame in being a target of racism, and locating that shame with the perpetrators of racism. The message needs to be made clear through public education campaigns and at the local community level that every Australian has the right to be treated with respect and to live free from racism. Also required is rights based education programs and support structures for CALD community members, so that they know where to go to report racism and can receive support throughout the process

The ECCV submit that, if adequately resourced, local ethno-specific and multicultural community organisations would be ideal sites for education and consciousness raising around issues of racism and avenues for redress. Such organisations are already well trusted sources of information and support; they have strong community connections and are considered to be safe-spaces for work on sensitive issues such as racism (See response to question 9 and recommendation 34).

The ECCV support the third-party reporting systems that have been established by organisations such as the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the B’nai B’rith Anti-Defamation Commission and the Islamic Council of Victoria. This reporting model allows community members to report incidents of racism or defamation to their community representatives, who liaise regularly with the police in order to report the incidents.

The ECCV has an extensive membership base and has established long-term relationships and strong rapport with most CALD groups in Victoria. As such, with appropriate resourcing the ECCV is superbly placed to provide and promote a third-party reporting service.

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<sup>62</sup> ibid

<sup>63</sup> Op. cit: 598

<sup>64</sup> Mellor, D., Bynon, G., Maller, J., Cleary, F., Hamilton, A. and Watson, L., (2001). ‘The Perception of Racism in Ambiguous Scenarios’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27 (3), 473-488, as cited in, Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K., (2011): 597



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The ECCV submit that those who experience racism at the personal level will be more willing to name and address it in an environment where racism is considered abhorrent at the public level. As such it is essential that all political and community leaders clearly and consistently denounce racism and work against it with their words, their policies and their actions (see Recommendation 3)

**The ECCV recommend:**

- 39.** That in order to support the National Anti-racism Strategy, the ECCV be resourced in a manner that will allow the organisation to offer and promote third-party reporting services to CALD Victorians.

**Question 12:**

**What strategies or approaches can be used to help bystanders address racism where and when it occurs?**

The ECCV submit that the promotion and empowerment of bystander anti-racism is an essential element of the anti-racism agenda. Bystander anti-racism can work to cease perpetration and escalation of racism and has the potential to prevent or lessen the physical, psychological, and social harms that may result. Bystander racism also strengthens broader social norms that reject racism, which can assist people in recognising and rejecting it themselves. Research in this area has demonstrated that bystander anti-racism can have positive effects not only for those who are the targets of racism, but for those who witness bystander anti-racism and those who are confronted by it. For those who are the targets of racism, not only is their experience or racism “blunted or intercepted”<sup>65</sup> by bystander interventions, they also feel supported and enjoy an affirmed sense of citizenship, belonging and community.<sup>66</sup> Those who witness bystander anti-racism may also feel safer in their community (particularly if they are targets of racism) and can also be inspired by the experience and more inclined to intervene in racism themselves.<sup>67</sup> It has been argued that those who engage in racist speech and behaviour often have a false sense of consensus, whereby they overestimate the general level of support for their views.<sup>68</sup> Public condemnation through bystander anti-racism can challenge this inflated sense of public support and, at the same time, reduce the level of other people’s future passivity around racism.

The ECCV support the following definition of bystander anti-racism:

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<sup>65</sup> Dunn K. M. & Nelson J.K. and Paradies, Y., (2011), ‘Bystander Anti-Racism: A Review of the Literature’, *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 11: 280

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*



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*Action taken by a person or persons (not directly involved as a target or perpetrator) to speak out about or to seek to engage others in responding (either directly or indirectly, immediately or at a later time) against interpersonal or systemic racism.<sup>69</sup>*

This definition does not limit action to spontaneous instances of overt racism and highlights the importance of bystander action that addresses racism in its more subtle and systemic forms.

Acts of bystander anti-racism include:<sup>70</sup>

- Direct and immediate action, i.e. confronting a perpetrator.
- Supporting and comforting a target after an experience of racism.
- Alerting and seeking support from authority figures or other personnel (police, business managers, teachers, other bystanders) in order to intervene.
- The formal reporting of the incident to relevant authorities, which may include third party agencies.

The ECCV support the view that bystander action is facilitated by a clear knowledge of what racism is, its variety of forms, an awareness of its negative effects and an ability to empathise with targets.<sup>71</sup>

In order to achieve the above the ECCV submit that a public education campaign is required which explores the various types of racism (subtle, overt, systemic, casual, non-intentional) and the effect it has on targets and on our society as a whole. As has been pointed out by Nelson et al (2011), there is a need, via public education to increase awareness of “the wider detrimental effects of everyday racism, such as racist jokes and stereotypes, as these more mundane offences may be evaluated as too insignificant to warrant a response”<sup>72</sup> (see Recommendation 4).

In order to participate in bystander anti-racism, those who wish to intervene need to be confident that they have the skills to do so, this is also important insofar as safety is concerned. In response to this, public and site specific (e.g. workplaces, community groups, schools) skills education and capacity building related to taking effective bystander action would be of benefit.

Of the many obstacles to bystander anti-racism, one that appears to be very powerful is the fear of imperilling important relationships by intervening in racism perpetrated by a person one knows, such as a friend, family member, colleague, or manager. It can also be very difficult to speak out in situations where one is fairly certain that their opinion will not be supported, that is to say, in a situation in which there is a racist consensus and as such an in-group status to be gained through participation and, perhaps, lost through intervention. Addressing racism in such situations requires skills and confidence. It

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<sup>69</sup> Op.cit: 265  
<sup>70</sup> Op.cit): 280

<sup>71</sup> Op. cit: 276  
<sup>72</sup> ibid



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has been observed that bystander anti-racism of this variety is very important, but requires particular conversational skills and strategies.<sup>73</sup> This is the type of capacity building that U.S.-based Southern Poverty Law Centre seeks to provide through the guide *Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry*.<sup>74</sup> This guide, an element of the Southern Poverty Law Centre's Teaching Tolerance project, provides tips, conversation starters and strategies for dealing with racism in a variety of forms and settings, including within families and friendship groups, in public spaces, at work and in schools. The ECCV submit that, though this project focuses on American experiences, it is a useful model and could be adapted to the local context, as a resource for schools, workplaces, community groups and other key sites.

**The ECCV recommend:**

40. That the National Anti-Racism Strategy includes information provision and capacity building measures around bystander anti-racism, with a view to empowering bystanders by enhancing skills and confidence. This should include public campaigns, online resources and partnerships with community organisations, workplaces and schools.

**The ECCV appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this process. For more information regarding the above submission please contact:**

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<sup>73</sup> Op.cit: 278

<sup>74</sup> *Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry*, 2005, Produced by Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Available:

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