



Joint Position Statement from the three local anti-racism support networks in Victoria

The three local anti-racism support networks in Wyndham, Whittlesea and Melbourne's southeast (Greater Dandenong, Casey, Cardinia) acknowledge that **racism is a persistent problem** that causes serious harm in many different ways—to individuals and communities targeted by racism as well as to the broader community and society as a whole. The networks are committed to providing **safe spaces** for those who have experienced racism to speak out, report incidents, receive emotional support, and connect, where possible, with other specialised support services. The networks also record incidences of racism in order to raise public awareness and advocate for effective anti-racism actions and policies.

Racism is often experienced in everyday life through interactions with others. It can occur in subtle ways that make people feel unwelcome, looked down upon, or excluded, and sometimes it takes more overt and explicit forms. People may experience discrimination—unfair or less favourable treatment—or verbal insults and even physical threats and abuse. This happens across all areas of life: when looking for work, in the workplace, in schools, in public places like shopping centres or on public transport, within the healthcare system, and in media coverage or on social media.

However, racism is more than prejudice, interpersonal discrimination, or poor treatment. Prejudice and discrimination reinforce a system where some groups of people hold a disproportionate amount of power and are overrepresented in decision-making positions. This system creates and maintains an **unjust racial hierarchy and a power imbalance** along ethnic or cultural lines, where in Australia, Anglo-Saxon 'white' is positioned as the norm, and those who fall outside of this category are labelled as 'others'. **Systemic racism** is reflected in persistent misrepresentation, and in policies and practices that—intentionally or unintentionally—exclude racialised communities. Systemic racism can facilitate prejudice and discrimination, which in turn reinforce structural inequalities and sustain these power imbalances.

Racism targets and affects a wide range of groups. The networks acknowledge that First Nations peoples continue to face racism, rooted in a legacy of colonisation, dispossession, and forced assimilation. These experiences have created intergenerational trauma and structural inequalities that persist until today. Racism also targets other racialised communities, including many non-Anglo-Saxon migrant communities and their Australian-born descendants. While there are no distinct human 'races'—only one human race—racism is based on a process of racialisation. Racism can manifest in various ways, such as cultural superiority claims, demands for assimilation, and as bigotry or hatred targeting members of religious communities and their faith; examples include Islamophobia and antisemitism.

Although the expression of racism may differ depending on the group targeted, the underlying system remains the same: a constructed human hierarchy that positions some groups as superior and others as inferior, based on characteristics such as skin colour, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, or other related markers. The Network advocates for **equal human dignity for all**. It rejects—and is committed to combating—all forms of racism that undermine the principles of equity, fairness, and racial justice

Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network, led by Wellsprings for Women, Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre (SMRC), South East Community Links (SECL) and Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)

Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network, led by Wyndham Community and Education Centre

Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network, led by Whittlesea Community Connections

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