

Your rights and responding to racism

Every Victorian has the right to equal and effective protection against discrimination, and to enjoy their human rights without discrimination.

In Victoria, these rights are protected under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, which contains 20 basic rights that promote and protect the values of freedom, respect, equality, and dignity.

What is discrimination?

Under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, discrimination is being treated badly or unfairly because of a personal characteristic that is protected by the law, such as race, religious belief, sex, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity when it happens in an area of public life such as:

- work
- school, TAFE or university
- a club or sporting organisation
- shops and restaurants
- aged care, hotels or rental properties

What is race discrimination?

Race discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly or bullies or harasses you because of your race, skin colour, ancestry, nationality or ethnic background.

Under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, race means a person's:

- colour
- descent or ancestry
- nationality
- ethnic background
- any characteristics associated with a particular race.

It is also against the law to victimise a person, which means treat them badly, because they have made complaint about discrimination or helped someone else make a complaint.

Examples of race discrimination

Insisting that all students speak English at all times, even during their breaks.

A property manager not renting a house to someone from a particular racial group because they think 'those people are not reliable'.

Not allowing someone from a particular racial group to join a club, or not employing them because they 'wouldn't fit in'.

What is racial and religious vilification?

The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act protects you from vilification, which means

- something done in public, which is
- based on the race or religion of a person or group of people, and is
- encouraging other people to hate or ridicule them.

The legal definition of vilification is “behaviour that incites hatred, serious contempt, revulsion or severe ridicule for a person or group of people, because of their race or religion”.

Examples of racial or religious vilification

Repeated and serious spoken or physical abuse about the race or religion of another person.

Encouraging violence against people who belong to a particular race or religion, or damaging their property.

How to report racism

[Get help](#) from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

If you have experienced racial or religious discrimination, victimisation or vilification we can give you information about your rights, tell you how to make a complaint, refer you to other services or help you report your concerns.

- We help people **resolve complaints** of discrimination and racial or religious vilification
- Our service is **free** and **fair**. It aims to help you deal with the issue quickly and in a supported environment
- We use a voluntary process called **conciliation** that aims to bring both sides together to find an outcome they can agree on

Contact us

Call: 1300 152 494

Report via our Community Reporting Tool

<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/get-help/community-reporting-tool/>

Email: enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au

For more information, visit our website at www.humanrights.vic.gov.au