

# End Racism, Act Now



VALS provided an extensive submission to the Commonwealth Government's Inquiry into racism, hate and extremism directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our submission discusses interpersonal and systemic racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as the ongoing rise of extremism directed towards our people. We make **53 recommendations** for the government to address the systems that allow racism to be perpetuated against Aboriginal people every day.

Racism experienced by Aboriginal people is shameful, pervasive, and is ingrained in Australian culture – it has been upheld by media, the education system and political narratives since invasion. Racism costs Aboriginal lives and wellbeing every day and is a stain on Australia's culture. As a country we can do so much better, and we must.

Aboriginal people have shared their experiences of racism time and time again. We know what needs to be done, and the Government does too. **Racism must end now.**

This document provides a summary of VALS submission and our key recommendations. The full submission can be downloaded from [VALS website](#).

## Summary of VALS submission

Our submission is based on our practice experience as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) that provides legal and community justice programs in Victoria, as well as direct community engagement. Our submission is structured in three parts: systemic racism, interpersonal racism and violent extremism.

### Part One: Systemic racism

Part One of our submission outlines the way that racism manifests in the systems we all access. This includes health, education, legal, coronial, cultural, political and legislative institutions and frameworks. These systems perpetuate racism because they were designed by colonial governments with racist settler-colonial views, and are maintained within a system and culture that has not yet evolved to take an anti-racist approach. We make **24 recommendations** aimed at systemic transformation and improvement.

Our key recommendations to address systemic racism include: implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including a national truth-telling process; implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; introduction of a national Human Rights Act; and the adoption of the federal Anti-Racism Strategy developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2024.



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## Part Two: Interpersonal racism

In Part Two, we discuss the prevalence and impact of interpersonal racism. This part is about the overt racism experienced by our mob every day, including abusive language, harassment, exclusion, humiliation and physical violence.

Community told us about the racism they experience in schools, sports, shops and everywhere else: abusive language on social media; slurs and mistreatment on the netball court and football fields; violent and grotesque policing; and discrimination, harassment and questioning of Aboriginal people in schools, universities and hospitals.

We highlight how interpersonal racism is interconnected with, and influenced by, systemic racism, which teaches, normalises and enables racism at the individual level without any consequences. We also highlight the devastating impact that racism has on our community, particularly our young people.

We outline how legal frameworks fail to provide sufficient remedy, consequence or accountability. We make **9 recommendations** to improve responses to interpersonal racism. These recommendations include: increasing our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures through education and a national awareness campaign; holding social media companies accountable for the harm they facilitate on their platforms; and strengthening legal frameworks available to people who experience interpersonal racism.

## Part Three: Extremism

Part Three discusses racist extremism and the rising risk of coordinated hate and violence directed towards Aboriginal people. White supremacist, racist and colonialist extremism towards Aboriginal people has been practiced in Australia since colonisation. Colonial powers used genocide, massacre, abduction and violence to steal Aboriginal land and commit destruction of culture, language, family and connection to Country.

Part Three discusses how recent attacks at Camp Sovereignty and Boorloo demonstrate that ideologically motivated racist violence towards Aboriginal people is a real and ongoing threat. It also discusses how Australia's national security and criminal legal systems operate with a double standard in how they police (or fail to police) violence by white extremists, as compared to the way they over-police and under-protect non-white people. We also discuss how racist narratives in politics and the media - and the lack of accountability for racist violence - normalise and enable terrorism and violent extremism towards Aboriginal people.





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We make **20 recommendations** to address Australia's current discriminatory approach to addressing extremism in Australia. The recommendations focus on how to better address white supremacist, racist and colonialist extremism through early intervention and prevention measures, including by addressing systemic racism as a key enabler of extremism.

## What Supporters Can Do

VALS' recommendations add to and draw from the recommendations that Aboriginal people and organisations have been making for decades. **Recommendations from previous Inquiries have been met with government inaction and ongoing racism, hate and violence. We must hold the government to account for this, and ensure this Inquiry is not just another act of performative care and concern without real action.**

Immediate steps you can take to support our submission:

1. Join us in calling for implementation of all our recommendations – you can read our full submission [here](#),
2. Sign [the petition](#) for a federal Human Rights Act (recommendation 16 of VALS submission),
3. Call for implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (recommendation 17 of VALS submission),
4. Call for implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart (recommendation 8 of VALS submission),
5. Call on the Government to urgently adopt and implement the *National Anti-Racism Framework: A roadmap to eliminating racism in Australia* (recommendation 14 of VALS submission).

