



beyondblue's anti-discrimination campaign **Stop. Think. Respect.**

***beyondblue's* new national campaign highlights the impact of racial discrimination on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

Experiences of discrimination are linked to poor mental health, with subtle or 'casual' racism just as harmful as more overt forms. Launching on 29 July 2014, this campaign highlights the damaging effects of subtle racism and encourages all Australians to check their behaviour.

The campaign:

- aims to reduce the impact of interpersonal discrimination on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by raising awareness among non-Indigenous people and challenging them to question their own behaviour and expressions of racial discrimination, particularly subtle racism
- targets non-Indigenous men and women aged 25-34, with the secondary target audience of 35-44 year olds
- targets people in these age groups with particular mindsets – those who do not consider themselves to be racist and who want to be seen as tolerant, but may engage in subtle acts of discrimination, believe negative stereotypes, tell racist jokes, or make insensitive or offensive comments out of fear, ignorance or habit
- reinforces that subtle racism is still discrimination, and that this has a negative effect on the lives and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The rationale for the campaign

- National survey data shows that at least one quarter (27 per cent) of Indigenous Australians regularly experience racism.¹ More detailed local-area research has found that up to four out of five Indigenous people regularly experience racism.²
- Several studies have demonstrated a link between experiences of racism and poorer mental health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including a greater risk of developing depression and anxiety, substance use and attempted suicide.

- Almost one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience high or very high levels of psychological distress, which is a risk factor for anxiety and depression. This is nearly three times the rate for non-Indigenous Australians.³ Over half (56 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experience discrimination report feelings of psychological distress.⁴
- Racial discrimination has a compounding effect on mental health. In a recent Victorian study conducted by The Lowitja Institute, an overwhelming majority (97 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people surveyed experienced racism multiple times.⁵
- As incidences of racism rise, the risk of high or very high psychological distress also increases. Two thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents exposed to 12 or more incidents of racism in the previous 12 months reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.⁵
- Racial discrimination can be both overt, such as verbal abuse or being spat at, and subtle, such as being left out, stared at or avoided. Often people who are engaging in subtle forms of discrimination do not understand that they are doing so, or do not fully realise the impact of their attitudes and behaviour.



- Subtle forms of racial discrimination are more prevalent than overt forms. Market research and stakeholder consultation conducted for the campaign emphasised the need to address the former, while other research shows that subtle discrimination is just as harmful to mental health as more overt forms.^{5,6}

Background

In 2012, *beyondblue* delivered a national awareness campaign highlighting the impact of discrimination on lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex (LGBTI) communities (Stop. Think. Respect. Phase One) which specifically targeted teenage boys, as well as the broader Australian population. Building on the success of this first phase, Phase Two focuses on another *beyondblue* priority community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



The target audience

Research from previous anti-racism campaigns has shown that no single message or approach will work for all people. General advertising campaigns are unlikely to produce significant behaviour changes in relation to interpersonal forms of racism and may even produce backlash effects in that they can shift people with ambivalent feelings into a more racist standpoint.⁷

beyondblue's target audience of non-Indigenous men and women aged 25-34 (with the secondary target of 35-44 year olds) was selected because we believe that tailored advertising to particular mindsets within this group can generate behavioural change. Research shows that anti-racism campaigns that aim to change behaviours have more success than those that seek to change attitudes or beliefs. However, altering behaviour can lead to attitudinal change.⁸

Drawing on the learnings of other campaigns, targeting particular mindsets within this group will ensure that a number of parents are reached; these people will influence value formation in their children and are likely to be active within community settings such as child-care centres and schools.⁹

We will also reach a large number of people in employment and education settings, which are two of the top three

places (the other being a shop or restaurant) where people experience racism.¹⁰

Our campaign is national because while there are some regional differences in attitudes towards different racial and cultural groups, there is little variation in racist attitudes between urban and rural areas.¹⁰

Introducing the 'invisible discriminator'

The campaign features five scenarios in various settings with a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous actors.

An unappealing character – the 'invisible discriminator' – appears in each scenario, whispering into the ears of the non-Indigenous actors. This character, while at first appearing as a real person, is soon revealed as imaginary. A symbol of subtle racism, he represents the unconscious racial bias that lives inside people's heads.

Each of the scenarios aims to elicit empathy from the viewer. Empathy – as opposed to other emotions such as pity or guilt – has been shown to be a powerful tool for combating prejudice.¹¹

The actors also share their experiences of everyday racial discrimination in a series of 'behind the scenes' interviews that will accompany the campaign.



Key messages

As well as its anti-discrimination message, the campaign refers to Phase One of Stop. Think. Respect.:

Discrimination leads to depression and anxiety in Indigenous Australians.

No one should be made to feel like crap, just for being who they are.

Stakeholder engagement

beyondblue established a national advisory group to guide the project's development. Its role includes ensuring all campaign materials are culturally sensitive, supporting the dissemination of the campaign and advising on potential partnerships.

The group includes a mix of representatives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, other organisations and individuals with specific knowledge and expertise.

Members are:

- Ms Susan Anderson (Chair), *beyondblue*
- Professor Steven Larkin, Special Advisor/*beyondblue* Board Director
- Ms Anna Nelson, Australian Human Rights Commission
- Professor Yin Paradies, Deakin University
- Ms Jane Powles, ANTaR
- Ms Mary Guthrie, The Lowitja Institute
- Ms Karen Mundine, Reconciliation Australia
- Dr John Scopel and Mr Alan Brown, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
- Ms Summer Finlay, National Congress of Australia's First Peoples
- Mr Tom Widdup, Oxfam
- Ms Irene Verins, VicHealth
- Ms Belinda Duarte, Korin Gamadji Institute (KGI) (Richmond Football Club)
- Ms Lisa Briggs, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- Ms Tania Dalton, Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA).

References

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008*. [Cat. No. 4714.0] ABS: Canberra.

² Paradies, Y (2014) *Racism and indigenous mental health*. Presentation to *beyondblue*. 20 March 2014.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) *Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: First Results, Australia, 2012-13* (Cat. No. 4727.0.55.001) ABS: Canberra.

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011) *The health and wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: An overview*. AIHW: Canberra.

⁵ Ferdinand, A., Paradies, Y. and Kelaher, M (2012) *Mental health impacts of racial discrimination in Victorian Aboriginal communities: The localities embracing and accepting diversity (LEAD) experiences of racism survey*. The Lowitja Institute: Melbourne.

⁶ Unpublished market research commissioned for *beyondblue*, 2013.

⁷ Donovan, RJ and Vlasis, R (2006) *A review of communication components of anti-racism and prodiversity social marketing/public education campaigns* (Paper 1). VicHealth: Melbourne.

⁸ Pedersen, A, Walker, I, Rapley, M and Wise, M (2003) *Anti-racism – what works? An evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-racism strategies*. Murdoch University, Perth.

⁹ VicHealth See *Beyond Race* evaluation report, June 2012.

¹⁰ University of Western Sydney Challenging Racism Research Project, National level findings: http://www.uws.edu.au/ssap/ssap/research/challenging_racism/findings_by_region [Accessed 20 June 2014.]

¹¹ Pedersen, A, Walker, I, Paradies, Y, and Guerin, B (2011) *How to cook rice: A review of ingredients for teaching anti-prejudice*. Australian Psychologist 46 55-63.

The expertise and insights of this group have been critical to the development of the campaign.

beyondblue also engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and community forums.

In addition, market research conducted for *beyondblue* in 2013 canvassed the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people across six metropolitan and regional locations. Focus groups and interviews were held with a total of 98 people (39 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 59 non-Indigenous people), helping to shape the campaign.

The campaign concept was also tested with the target audience through a series of focus groups.



Where to find more information

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