



News of the week

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

3/20/2025

Every year on 21 March, Australia joins the world in recognising the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, also through Harmony Week. We find out more about the importance of this day.

Main image: Staff in our Sydney office stand together in support against racial discrimination.

What is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination?

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) is observed globally every year on 21 March.



The United Nations established this day in 1966 to commemorate the Sharpeville Massacre that took place on 21 March 1960 in South Africa. On that day, police opened fire on a peaceful protest against apartheid laws, killing 69 people and injuring many more. This tragic event became a turning point in the fight against institutionalised racism.

Today, IDERD serves as a global call to action to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equality, and create inclusive societies. In Australia, it is recognised as part of [Harmony Week](#) (17–23 March), a national celebration of cultural diversity.

Why do we recognise IDERD?

Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world, home to people from nearly 300 different ancestries. Despite the [Racial Discrimination Act 1975 \(RDA\)](#) making it unlawful to racially discriminate, racial discrimination remains a serious issue in Australia.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has found that racial discrimination impacts employment, housing and education opportunities for many Australians. Additionally, First Nations Australians continue to face systemic discrimination. Recognising IDERD provides an opportunity to address these issues, challenge biases and build a more inclusive society.

What is racial discrimination?

[Racial discrimination](#) occurs when a person is treated less favourably or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin or their skin colour.

How can you get involved?

Educate yourself and others

Understanding racism and its impact is the first step toward eliminating discrimination. The Australian Human Rights Commission offers valuable resources, including the [Racism. It Stops With Me](#) campaign.

E-learning modules

- [SBS Inclusion Program](#) - a collection of online courses that provide individual self-paced learning in the areas of inclusion and diversity.
- [Respectful Workplaces](#) - explains what unacceptable behaviour is and provides you with tools to address unacceptable behaviour.

Speak Up against racism at work

If you witness or experience racial discrimination, report it to your manager or seek support from HR via [REDACTED]

The [Speak Up initiative](#) is an opportunity to strengthen our culture of openness, trust, transparency and accountability. 'Your voice matters' is the key message of the Speak Up initiative to create a workplace where everyone feels safe to speak up when something isn't right, voice their thoughts and opinions and know those opinions are valued.

Resources are also available for responding to racism on the [Racism. It Stops With Me](#) website.

Learn more about IDERD

To learn more, you can visit the [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) page on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website which includes fact sheets and anti-racism resources.

IDERD is a powerful reminder that we all have a role to play in building a fairer, more inclusive society. Whether through education, workplace initiatives or community participation, every action counts.

This is one of many significant cultural events that we are promoting to continually grow staff cultural awareness. You can also see [Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) to learn about other ways we promote diversity and inclusion at the ACMA and eSafety.