

RACISM IS AGAINST THE RULES

A GUIDE FOR PLAYERS



Know your rights

Everyone should be able to get involved, keep fit and have fun playing sport. This means you should all be treated with respect and equality in sport and feel safe regardless of your race.

Whether you're a player, coach, parent, spectator or an official, everyone has a role in preventing and responding to racism in sport.

Racial discrimination and vilification in sport

In Victoria, the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* provides protection from discrimination, including on the basis of a person's race. The *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* also provides protection from racial vilification.

Sporting players or people who are part of a sports team, such as coaches or volunteers are protected under the law. They also have obligations not to discriminate or vilify others in sport.



This brochure deals with racial discrimination and vilification in sport. The law also protects people from other forms of discrimination and in other areas of public life, such as at work or in school. It is also against the law to vilify someone because of their religious belief or activity. Please contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission for more information about other forms of discrimination and religious vilification.

WHAT IS RACIAL DISCRIMINATION?

In Victoria it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their race. This means treating someone unfavourably, or proposing to treat someone unfavourably, because of their race.

Race means a person's colour, descent, nationality, ancestry, ethnic background or any attribute associated with a particular race.¹ This definition includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Racial discrimination may take place where a person, because of their race, is:

- not selected in a sporting team or for a particular position or role
- excluded from participating in a sport or competition, including from coaching, umpiring or participating in sport administration
- refused a job they have applied for in a sporting club or organisation
- denied access to promotions, training or other employment benefits; dismissed; or subjected to any other detriment, in their employment in a sporting club or organisation
- refused access to a service, such as first aid, training, physiotherapy or food at a canteen.



Discrimination can also take place if an unreasonable policy or practice is applied that disadvantages someone because of their race.

WHAT IS VILIFICATION?

Racial vilification is behaviour that encourages others to hate or severely ridicule a person or have serious contempt for or feel revulsion towards a person (or group of people) because of their race.

Examples of behaviour in sport that could be seen as racial vilification include:

- a spectator who ridicules a player because of the player's race or skin colour
- a group of spectators who yell out comments that encourage violence against members of a team who belong to a particular race
- a coach who makes racist remarks to a player and encourages other team members to join in
- a team with players from a particular racial background who are ridiculed on a public Facebook page, which also encourages people to graffiti their club.

¹ *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) s 4; Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic) s 3.*

What are the responsibilities of sporting clubs and organisations?

Everyone involved in sport has a responsibility to address racism when they see it. This includes clubs and sports organisations.

The law says clubs must act to end and prevent racial discrimination and vilification. This includes taking proactive steps to prevent these behaviours from happening.

They must also respond appropriately when racism does take place. If you have experienced racism, your club has a responsibility to provide you with support, manage your complaint and make sure it doesn't happen again.

EXAMPLE: RESPONDING TO RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Mark is an Aboriginal football player who has often been the subject of racial slurs from his coach. For example, sometimes when there are family and cultural commitments, Mark can't attend training. His coach jokes in front of other players that Mark has 'gone walkabout' and later drops him from the team.

Mark raises this with the team manager, who arranges a meeting between Mark and his coach. With a greater understanding of Mark's cultural practices, the coach apologises and agrees to show more respect to all Aboriginal players in the team in future. Mark is also given back his position in the team.

The club decides to offer Aboriginal cultural awareness training for all staff, volunteers and coaches.

What can I do if I experience racism?

You can talk to another player, your coach, team manager or Member Protection Information Officer, if your club has one. You can report the incident to your club or sporting organisation. You should not be punished or threatened because you have asserted your right, made a complaint or helped someone else make a complaint. This is called victimisation and it is against the law.

The Fair Play Code

Everyone involved in sport in Victoria should abide by the *Fair Play Code*.² The code was developed by Sport and Recreation Victoria and states that 'people should refrain from any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, abuse, child abuse, intimidation, vilification and victimisation of others'.

If someone feels like another person has breached the Code, they can complain directly to their club or sporting organisation. If they wish to take it further, they can make an enquiry with the Commission to find out if we can help to resolve the complaint.

² For more information see: sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/community-sport-resources/fair-play-code

EXAMPLE: RESPONDING TO RACIAL VILIFICATION

The Albion Heights Netball Club has heard racist taunts coming from a group of members at their home games, directed at players on other teams. The club and the netball league take action to make it clear to spectators that racial vilification is not acceptable. This includes making announcements over a PA system, posting notices and removing offending spectators from the match.



How we can help

You can contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to find out more information or advice, or to make a report or complaint.

Even if you don't want to make a complaint, we can help you. If you have questions about racial discrimination, vilification or victimisation, you can contact the Commission. We won't take any further action unless you ask us to.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

1300 292 153 or (03) 9032 3583
enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au
humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

For more information or to register in a course, visit humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/training or call (03) 9032 3415.

Deaf, hearing or speech impaired? Contact the national relay service:
1800 555 660 or go to relayservice.com.au

More information

Vicsport

The peak body for sport and active recreation in Victoria.

vicsport.com.au

Sport and Recreation Victoria

Government authority dedicated to supporting Victoria's sport and recreation sector.

1300 650 172
sport.vic.gov.au

Play by the Rules

For more help to keep sport safe, fair and inclusive and tackle racism in sport visit playbytherules.net.au

Racism. It stops with me

National campaign to help the community respond to prejudice.

itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au

This information is intended as a guide only. It is not a substitute for legal advice.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners of the lands throughout Victoria and we pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

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