VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

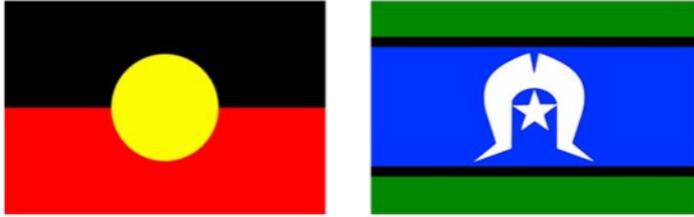# Evaluation of the anti-racism pilot project

Local community-led support networks: tailored reporting pathways and support for those experiencing racism and vilification

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Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/YUgarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

Contents

1. Background

Between 2019 and 2023, a Victoria University (VU) team conducted three consecutive place-based community engagement and research projects to explore the perspectives of local communities on reporting barriers and support needs for those who experience racism. This work was carried out in Wyndham (2019-2021), Whittlesea (2021-2022) and in Melbourne's southeast (Greater Dandenong and Casey; 2022-2023).

All three studies found that, while racism continues to be part of many people's lives, less than one in five have ever report any experience of racism. The reasons for this high level of **underreporting** are complex and often linked to an interplay between insufficient knowledge of reporting pathways, the view that existing services were inadequate, a widespread sense that 'nothing would change' and other deterring factors.[1]

Drawing on the shared experiences of local communities affected by racism, these three place-based projects developed locally specific roadmaps to address these challenges, proposing a set of recommendations on how to empower and enable more people to speak out against racism, report it and access support services that are tailored to their needs. A core recommendation within all three roadmaps revolved around **establishing local community-led anti-racism support services** to complement the existing reporting and support infrastructure, provided primarily by statutory agencies such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) and Victoria Police.

Towards community-led local antiracism support networks

Committed to implementing this recommendation, Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) and Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) – both were described by many in the projects as trusted and well-connected local organisations – developed a community-led anti-racism support network in their respective local area. In Melbourne's southeast, where the project concluded only in 2023, a steering group, coordinated by representatives from the three councils of Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia, was set up to work towards establishing a similar local community-led network that could provide anti-racism support services and reporting pathways across these three local government areas.

The VU studies offered evidence-based insights into how local support services can cater for the needs of communities affected by racism, but a crucial obstacle to fully implementing these services were tied to a lack of resources and funding. The Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network, coordinated by Wyndham CEC, as well as the Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network, coordinated by WCC, were successfully launched in 2021 and 2022 respectively and started their work focusing on raising awareness and networking – initially without additional funding. Due to limited resources, however, these networks were not able to systematically provide direct anti-racism support and reporting pathways for local communities, as recommended in the local roadmaps.

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[1] Peucker, M., Clark, T., & Claridge, H. (2024). Mapping the Journey of (non-) Reporting in Response to Racism: A Change-oriented Approach to Reporting Barriers, Motives and Support Needs. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *45*(3), 473–493.

Government's commitment to strengthening anti-racism

During the time when VU carried out these projects and while local community organisations, councils and service providers sought to develop placed-based anti-racism support services, the Victorian Government had also intensified its commitment to (more) effectively addressing racism in the state. In 2019, it launched an inquiry into the state's anti-vilification laws. After extensive community consultations, the Legal and Social Issues Committee of the Victorian State Parliament tabled the 'Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections' in March 2021 (Anti-Vilification Inquiry) and the Government's response was released six months later in September.

Parallel to that, the government established the Anti-Racism Taskforce, which was tasked with developing and providing advice and recommendations for the state's first anti-racism strategy. Both the Anti-Vilification Inquiry and the Anti-Racism Taskforce notably identified the need for additional, community-based support services for those who experience racism.

For example, recommendation 27 of Anti-Vilification Inquiry recommended that the Victorian Government fund services to provide support to impacted communities who experience vilification including:

a. services and programs that provide counselling and other support, and

b. services and programs providing legal information and assistance to navigate the system for reporting vilification.

The Government supported this recommendation in principle, recognising that appropriate support services and programs for people who experience vilification will be essential to support the expansion of Victorian anti-vilification laws. The Government was already funding several such services at the time of its response in September 2021 but committed to examining options to either strengthen or expand existing programs or develop and identify areas for possible future services.

In November 2024, Victoria's first Anti-Racism Strategy was released, a five-year plan to tackle racism and discrimination with the aim to 'build a safer, fairer and more inclusive state'. One of the four overarching goals in the Strategy is to ensure that 'people subjected to racism receive appropriate and culturally safe services and supports' (goal 4). More specifically, the strategy stated it would 'strengthen local anti-racism support networks for people who have experienced racism'.

Government-funding to advance local anti-racism support services

Consistent with the Victorian Government's response to the 2021 Anti-Vilification Inquiry (in particular Recommendation 27) as well as some of the key recommendations of the Anti-Racism Taskforce, the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet provided funding for the pilot project *Building place-based and community-led anti-racism support in Wyndham, Whittlesea and Melbourne's southeast*, coordinated by Victoria University. The funding period for this project started in July 2024 and concluded in November 2025, with the delivery of an evaluation report in December.

At the time when the funded project formally started, the Wyndham and Whittlesea anti-racism networks were already formally established and had started to operate, while in Melbourne's southeast the council-led steering group had made significant progress towards setting up a network covering Casey, Greater Dandenong and Cardinia. However, none of these networks had begun to systematically provide dedicated anti-racism support and local reporting pathways. The government funding was intended to change this, providing the networks with the resources to advance their operation and develop into local support and reporting hubs for community members who have experience racism (including racial or religious vilification). The funding was managed by a Victoria University team, which also coordinated the project, and large proportion of the funds was divided up between the organisations that lead the three local networks.

This report presents and discusses key insights from the evaluation of the project. After a brief outline of the evaluation framework and methods, it describes and analyses achievement and challenges in four sections:

- the different structures of the three networks,
- activities undertaken to build their capacity to provide anti-racism support,
- the delivery of anti-racism support and experiences with documenting racism, and
- the promotion of these services and engagement with various stakeholders.

2. Evaluation framework and methods

VU developed an evaluation framework, including a transparent theory of change, expected outputs and outcomes, indicators of success and methods of data collection. This framework was submitted to, and approved by, the Department in October 2024. The evaluation study received ethics approval by the VU Human Research Ethics Committee (HRE 24-151).

Theory of Change

Research has consistently shown – also in Victoria – that most people who face racism do not report these experiences[2], which means they do not access the support they may need. Moreover, this underreporting contributes to the actual and current scope and nature of racism remaining hidden. VU's research since 2019 has highlighted that existing reporting pathways and support services are often underutilized, not only because people are often not aware of them, but also because these services are not seen as trusted places that can offer the kind of advocacy-oriented support people often seek.

To address this gap, many affected communities have called for alternative anti-racism support options that are community-led, place-based and locally trusted. In response to these community demands, local anti-racism networks have been set up in three local areas in Melbourne. These networks are not meant to replace but to complement the current reporting and support infrastructure, which is dominated by state-wide statutory agencies such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) and Victoria Police.

This pilot project seeks to advance the reporting and support services of these local anti-racism networks in Wyndham, Whittlesea and Melbourne's southeast (Casey, Greater Dandenong and Cardinia) to serve as reporting and support hubs for those experiencing racism and/or vilification. The goal of the project is to encourage more people to speak out against racism, report it and access support. To achieve this goal, this project seeks to

- build the capacity of local network organsiations to provide information, basic support and referral services to those experiencing racism and/or vilification and to systematically record reported cases of racism, and
- promote these local services among the local communities affected by racism through communication engagement activities and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Operationalising the theory of change and the key goals of the projects, expected outputs, outcomes and indicators of success were identified and agreed upon with the Department. These are outlined in table 1.

Methods of data collection

The evaluation draws on a combination of data sources, which were all systematically analysed. This includes internal documentation of various project activities by the project coordination team at VU, capturing what key activities were delivered through the course of project (e.g. workshops, presentation, website, booklet), as well as minutes from network meetings and the post-workshop feedback survey after the capacity building training. Another

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[2] Peucker, M., Vaughan, F., Doley, J., & Clark, T. (2025). Speaking out against racism? Silence, agency and unheard voices among racialised communities in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2025.2508393.

core element of the data collection for the evaluation is a series of six in-depth interviews with eight key representatives of the three anti-racism support networks, which were undertaken either in-person or online between September and October 2025. In addition, the analysis for this evaluation written information provided by network members, an analysis of racism-related complaints/reports recorded by the networks as well as engagement data from the new _Antiracism Victoria_ website.

Table 1: Expected outputs, outcomes and indicators of success

Expected outputs	Expected outcomes
The project seeks to deliver the following outputs: - Building capacity within network organisations to fulfil their new role - Engaging with local communities affected by racism (within and beyond the existing clients of the network organisations) to build trust in and awareness of new services - Creating a recording template and process in compliance with privacy laws - Development of promotion material for the new services across the three networks (e.g. booklet, flyers, posters) - Creating and maintaining the _Antiracism Victoria_ website.	The project aims to achieve the following outcomes: - Expanding and consolidating networks of local community service providers and community organisations - Advancing the services of existing local anti-racism networks in Victoria to serve as local hubs and safe spaces for those experiencing racism - Building the capacity of existing networks (and the organisations involved) to provide information, basic support and referral services to those experiencing racism. - Promoting new reporting and support services through campaigns and outreach events

Measuring outcomes

As part of a transparent evaluation process and in line with the above outlined theory of change as well as expected outputs and outcomes of the project, the following factors were identified as indicators of success.

- Increased community awareness of rights and support/reporting pathways
- Accessibility of new and pre-existing services of reporting and support
- Referrals to other support agencies or reporting services
- New reporting and support services are put in place
- Staff at network organisations are trained and qualified staff to provide information, basic support and referral service
- Reported cases of racism are systematically recorded
- Increased awareness of racism and support services among other local stakeholders
- Indication that communities are increasingly aware of the new services
- Communities start showing more willingness to speak out and using the new services (i.e. contact new services, increased reporting)
- Increase in reporting (based on new reporting data but possibly also through external data)
- Foundation laid for sustainability of service

3. Findings

Establishment, growth and structure of networks

When the pilot project formally started in July 2024, two of the three anti-racism support networks – one operating in Wyndham and the other one in Whittlesea – were already established with core member organisations and clear leadership structures in place. The Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network has been coordinated by Wyndham CEC since its inception in 2021, and the Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network was set up under the leadership of WCC in 2022. While both networks have facilitated valuable ongoing discussions with local stakeholders around (anti-)racism, neither of them was in a position to develop and provide targeted anti-racism support services and reporting pathways. The Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network had not been formally established in July 2024, but the announcement of the government-funded pilot project gave the impetus to expedite the previous efforts by the local council-led anti-racism steering group (2023-2024) to set up such a local network.

Each of the three networks is led by either one community organisation (in Wyndham and Whittlesea) or jointly led by several organisations, as is the case with the Southeast Network. Before outlining the membership structure of the three networks, it is important to describe the basic roles and responsibilities of the lead and other network member organisations.

The **lead organisations** are the coordinating centers of each of network. Supported by VU during the pilot project, they are the key decision-makers with regards to network meetings, capacity building trainings, promotion of the services (e.g. promotion material), liaising with other stakeholders as well documentation of disclosed cases of racism. In addition to this coordination role, the core task of the lead organisations is to provide direct anti-racism support for community members. While the nature of this support differs (as will be discussed further below), all six lead organisations are tasked with the delivery of qualified and advocacy-oriented anti-racism support and referral advice in a culturally safe environment and a documentation system to record disclosed cases of racism in order to develop local evidence on racism.

Non-leading network member organisations have less extensive responsibilities and greater flexibility in defining and implementing their roles. As a minimum requirement, each network member organisation has to be willing and able to, formally or informally, promote the new services among their clients or community networks and refer those who raise an issue of racism to the respective anti-racism support network. All network members have been invited to consider expanding this basic role and activities, which may include, for some of them, providing safe spaces for their clients or community members to report racism and get support (including referral), similar to what the lead organisations are tasked to provide.

The **Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network** has been led by Wyndham CEC since 2021. After the commencement of the pilot project in 2024, the network consolidated its membership base, which currently encompasses the following organisations as network members: Junubi Wyndham (African community focus), Pasifika Community of Australia, MiCare, Mercy Health, Westjustice as well as a representative of the Victorian Board of Imams. Several of these organisations, including Westjustice and Mercy Health, formally joined the network after the launch of the project. The promotion material, developed by the Wyndham Network, calls on

people who have experienced racism and seek support to reach out to Wyndham CEC, Junubi Wyndham, Pasifika Community of Australia, MiCare or Westjustice.

The membership structure of the **Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network** has not substantially changed since the project started. It is led by WCC, which offer a range of community services, from settlement to legal services. It includes the following network member organisations: DPV Health, Victoria Police, Melbourne Polytechnic, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) as well as representatives of the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) and the Victorian Board of Imams. The promotion material for the Whittlesea Network lists only WCC as the contact for those who seek support and want to report racism. The other network members do currently not provide direct anti-racism support – or are at least not promoted publicly as members of the Whittlesea Network that offers this kind of support (although some of them have been providing anti-racism support in different ways and outside the local network, such as the ICV's Islamophobia Support Service or AMWCHR).

In contrast to Wyndham and Whittlesea, the leadership structure of the **Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network**, covering the three local government areas of Casey, Greater Dandenong and Cardinia, was finalised during the early stages of the pilot project in 2024. A consortium of four locally based service providers decided to step up and become lead organisations of the newly founded network:

- Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre (SMRC),
- South East Community Links (SECL),
- Wellsprings for Women, and
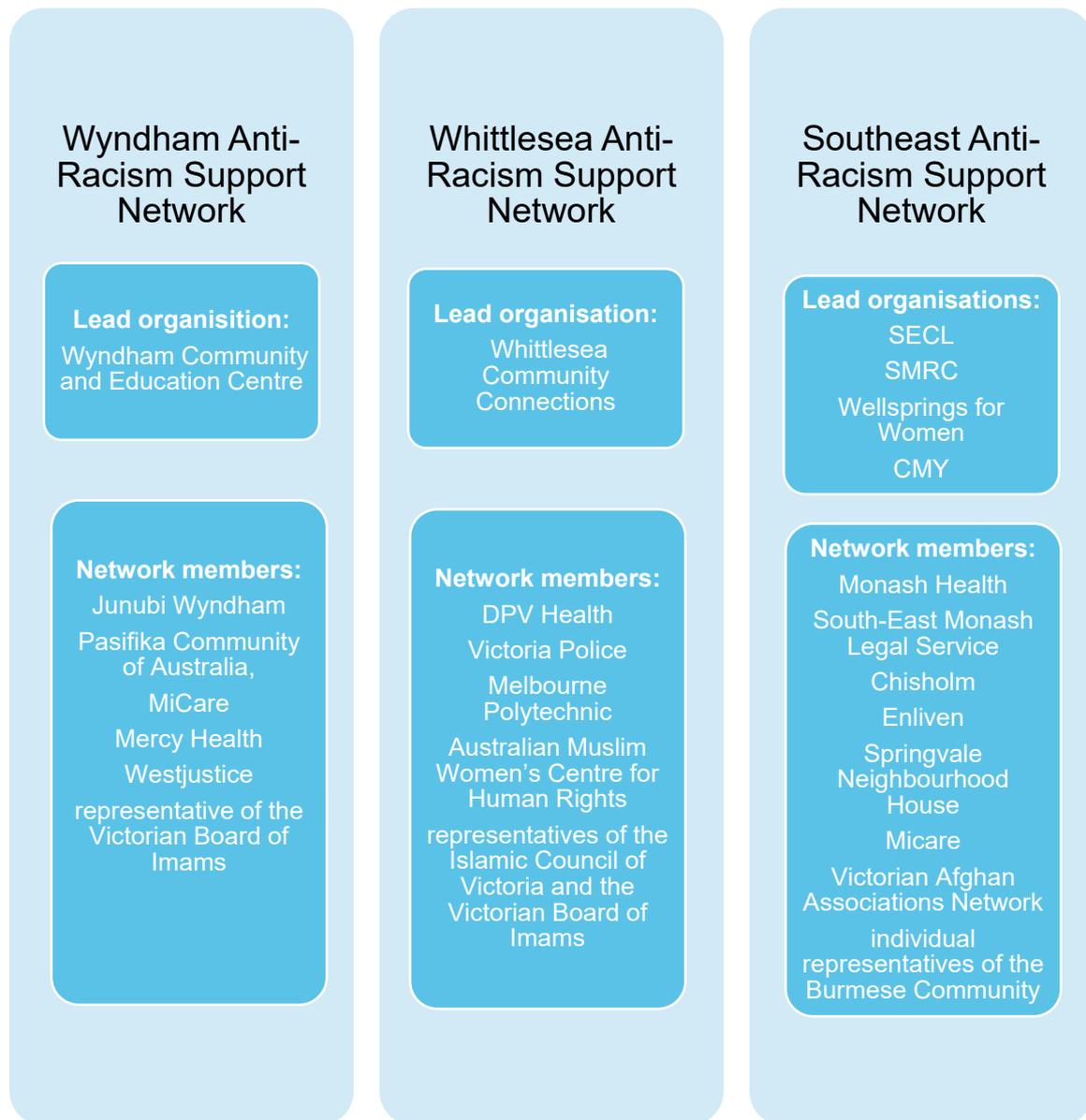- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY).

Other network members, many of which had been engaged in discussions about local anti-racism and have expressed their interest in joining a local network prior to 2024, include Monash Health, South-East Monash Legal Service, Chisholm, Enliven, Springvale Neighbourhood House, and individual representatives of the Burmese Community. The Greater Dandenong Mental Health and Wellbeing Local (Mind Australia) formally joined the network soon after its inception, and Micare and the Victorian Afghan Associations Network (VAAN) were welcomed as new member organisations later on during the pilot project. Apart from the four lead organisations of the Southeast Network, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local is listed in the promotion material as the only non-lead network member to offer culturally safe spaces for people to report and get support after an experience of racism.

A note on anti-racism support for people from First Nations communities

All lead organisations have a strong focus on working with migrant, refugee and multicultural communities. While some of them count First Nations peoples among their clients, none of them is an Indigenous-led organisation or is specialised in service delivery for First Nations communities. During the project, the networks actively sought to connect with Aboriginal-led organisations and to explore possibilities to collaborate, but none of the network was able to expand their anti-racism services (or their network) in a way that could offer culturally appropriate support specifically to First Nations peoples. All network promotion material, the new website and many awareness raising activities included information about specific

Aboriginal-led support including 13YARN, the online reporting platform *Call it Out* and the Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service.

Graph 1: Overview of the three networks

Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network	Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network	Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network
Lead organisition: Wyndham Community and Education Centre	**Lead organisation:** Whittlesea Community Connections	**Lead organisations:** SECL, SMRC, Wellsprings for Women, CMY
Network members: Junubi Wyndham, Pasifika Community of Australia, MiCare, Mercy Health, Westjustice, representative of the Victorian Board of Imams	**Network members:** DPV Health, Victoria Police, Melbourne Polytechnic, Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, representatives of the Islamic Council of Victoria and the Victorian Board of Imams	**Network members:** Monash Health, South-East Monash Legal Service, Chisholm, Enliven, Springvale Neighbourhood House, Micare, Victorian Afghan Associations Network, individual representatives of the Burmese Community

Preparing for new anti-racism support service provision

Once the three networks were established in their current form, one of the first central step towards setting up the new support services was to build or expand the capacity of the lead organisations (and some other key network members organisations) to offer culturally safe anti-racism support, to discuss referral options and to systematically document reported cases of racism through an online platform.

Two sets of activities were taken to achieve this goal: (1) building capacity of relevant staff at the network member organisations, and (2) setting up internal processes to ensure community

members who report racism to the network are connected to the designated and qualified person within the organisation.

Capacity building

The capacity building training was delivered as a series of two in-person workshop sessions (2-2.5 hour), run separately for each of the three networks. The first session aimed at strengthening racial literacy and providing guidance for organisations on how to establish internal process to enable them to respond to disclosures of racism and how to respond (note: all organisations have longstanding experience in working with culturally and racially marginalised communities). The second session focused specifically on (a) building capacity to understand existing support options and reporting pathways and to offer informed referral advice to those who experienced racism, and (b) on how to use the online documentation system to systematically record disclosed incidents.

A total of around 40-45 representatives of the network lead organisations (e.g. anti-racism coordinators, bicultural workers, settlement workers) as well as from several other network member organisations took part in these capacity building training sessions, delivered by VU in late 2024 and early 2025. An additional training session was delivered in-person specifically to around 15 Micare staff, most of them based in Wyndham but some also joined online from the southeast.

The feedback on these training sessions was very positive, and participants across all three networks consistently stressed how the training increased their understanding of racism, expanded their awareness of existing support services and prepared them for the delivery of the anti-racism support and the documentation of the reported incidents of racism.

The WCC representative stated that the training sessions have made her and her staff 'more aware of existing services' and that they 'definitely learned so much, also about people's experiences, also about the different legislations, the statutory bodies … and different reporting pathways.' The Wyndham CEC anti-racism coordinator similarly noted that the training has expanded her knowledge about existing anti-racism reporting and support services but 'also around addressing the emotional wellbeing of people. Being sometimes someone who can just listen instead of pushing people to report straight away'.

Representatives from the Southeast Network expressed similar views. According to the SMRC representative, the training built awareness among their case managers and other staff members around support and reporting options, as well as helped them understand how to manage the conversation with clients about racism and to 'consistently' record and document these experiences: 'The training helped the case managers and those that are working directly [with clients] what it is that you would ask and what those prompts might look like to allow that client to feel comfortable to express that.'

A SECL representative described the training as 'very, very informative' and called the training an 'eye opener' for them to 'better understand the level of racism… and why it's not being reported'. The anti-racism coordinator at CMY also found the trainings 'quite useful' and stated that they have 'helped a lot' and deepened his knowledge of existing support and reporting pathways: 'You know, sometimes you are down and don't know what to do. You can reflect on the training and that gives you an idea of how to approach that situation.'

Post-training feedback data was collected only for the second workshop (due to delays in Ethics approval). The responses of those who completed the brief survey (Graph 2) underscore the positive assessment, indicating that (almost) everyone agreed that

- they have now a better understanding Victoria's anti-racism support and reporting pathways;
- they feel more confident now to assist people who experienced racism in finding appropriate support; and
- the training prepared them to document incidents of racism.

Graph 2: Feedback on the second capacity building training

After the training all lead network organisations received a locally tailored **directory** of existing anti-racism reporting and support services. This resource (developed by VU), which lists and briefly explains various existing services and ways to contact them, was intended to further assist those within the networks who provide anti-racism support to community members in particular in their discussions of suitable referral options.

Internal preparatory processes

All lead organisations have undertaken steps to ensure that clients or other community members who seek anti-racism support are connected within the organisation to the staff who is trained to provide qualified support. One central element of this internal preparatory work was to train key staff (beyond those who attended the VU run capacity building trainings, see above) to be able to identify racism and to either provide support (including documenting the incident) themselves or, alternatively, to connect the person to the designated anti-racism support staff/coordinator within the respective organisation.

At Wyndam CEC, for example, the coordinator of the Wyndham Network ran anti-racism support training for all 120 staff members, building everyone's capacity to recognise racism and respond to the disclosure of racism by clients or community members. While all staff are now trained to respond, they can also refer to the coordinator of the Wyndham Network at Wyndham CEC if further assistance is needed in providing anti-racism support or documenting disclosed incidents. The coordinator explained:

> We delivered the training to everybody at Wyndham CEC, so that everyone in our organisation can be that person you could report to. We created connections in our internal SharePoint, where they can access information about the network and they can access the reporting template online and the resources about where to refer people to. But they all know that I'm the backbone. So, if it gets complicated … they all know they can refer the client to me.

Other network lead organisations focused their preparatory processes on key staff, in particular those who typically work directly with the community. WCC, the lead organisation of the Whittlesea Network, for example, set up an internal working group specialised on anti-racism support. The group, which comprises staff from the WCC's intake and assessment team, the settlement team, and legal services, have all received internal anti-racism training and meet regularly. In addition, WCC has one central contact person for anti-racism support, and her contact details are made available publicly.

In the Southeast Network, lead organisations pursued different approaches, tailored to the specifics of their organisational structures and processes. SECL, for example, took measures to inform all staff through written communication and presentations about the new anti-racism network and the support services SECL provides within this network. In addition, most frontline staff received targeted training:

> Most of the … frontline staff, whether it's community well-being, settlements or financial counselling, all are trained to receive [reports of racism] or record them and help them and guide them if they say that they have faced racism. So, they do provide that support.

Two key staff at SECL have coordinated these internal processes, who are also the contact persons for all matters related to anti-racism.

SMRC has put greater emphasis on the intake process, where new clients connect with any of their services. This 'first point of entry' is used as an opportunity to identify any particular incidents of racism the client would like to share. The SMRC case managers play a key role in these processes and have been trained to have these intake conversations and provide adequate support when incidents of racism are being raised.

Wellsprings for Women have pursued a more outreach-oriented approach. The anti-racism coordinator has organised targeted anti-racism support training to 25 Wellsprings staff, many of whom run a variety of community programs. These trained staff members have actively promoted the anti-racism support services and anti-racism rights among community members, especially those who attend Wellsprings programs. Together with the Wellsprings anti-racism coordinator, they have delivered around 20 information sessions to an average of 25 (most female) participants each, reaching estimated 500 community members in total.

CMY, the fourth lead organisation of the Southeast Network, has established an internal anti-racism group specifically working on anti-racism support; team members are trained to pass on disclosed reports of racism to the anti-racism coordinator at CMY. Community members then connect with him directly. He noted: 'People get directly connected with me, yes, and I take the call or call back in the next 24 hours'. He explained:

> CMY has an anti-racism group specifically working on that. I have people out there, if anyone in the community is targeted by racism [and they find out about it], they must let me know. They can tell me their story. Most community members are more comfortable talking to us than reporting to someone they don't know.

All lead organisations have taken a series of measures to set up the new services and to ensure that (a) staff have the capacity and expertise to provide support and that (b) community members who face racism and seek support are connected to the 'right' person within the network. Notwithstanding the different approaches the organisation have taken, all of them were confident that they have the capacity and suitable processes in place to prove anti-racism support as intended.

Promotion and community reach

Some of the above outlined internal processes included community outreach and promotion activities (e.g. Wellsprings). This section discusses the various steps taken by the networks to promote themselves and their new anti-racism support services more broadly as well as non-discrimination and vilification protection rights in Victoria; these activities include

- running information sessions,
- preparing and sharing promotion material,
- website and social media based promotion, and
- raising awareness through public newsletter and media reports.

Information and awareness raising sessions

Increasing community awareness of anti-racism rights as well as the existence of the networks the support for people who faced racism has been a core element during the pilot project – and it is regarded by the network lead organisations as a multipronged process that needs to be ongoing. One central way of promoting the networks' support services is through information sessions (some online but mostly in-person) targeting both grassroots community members as well as service providers. Most lead organisations and several other network member organisations have held such information events.

Southeast Network

For the Southeast Network, as mentioned above, Wellsprings for Women has run around 20 community information session, many of them through various existing Wellsprings programs and courses, reaching a total of approximately 500 people during 2025.

The CMY anti-racism coordinator has run a total 10 anti-racism information sessions to make community members aware of the anti-racism rights and support and encourage them to speak out and report racism (additional sessions are currently planned). Five of these sessions targeted local youth, reaching 102 people; the other five sessions were for parents, reaching a total of 61 people.

The other two lead organisations in the Southeast Network, SECL and SMRC, also delivered a series of anti-racism information sessions promoting the new services, for example, to

- local service providers from libraries and neighbourhood centres at a Doveton Network meeting (Autumn Place in Casey),
- the local Afghan Women's Friendship Group,

- two local African community groups,
- a group of around 20 diverse community leaders at Little Croft Children's,
- an Afghan women's Sewing Group at Narre Warren South (20 women) and
- over 30 EAL student at Living & Learning Pakenham.

Other member organisations of the Southeast Network have also actively contributed to raise awareness of the new support services. The Mental Health and Wellbeing Local, for example, ran a training session for its internal Community Capacity Building team, which subsequently shared information about anti-racism rights and support services at various occasions – in presentations as well as through informal conversations and meetings – with community groups and other stakeholders they work with (e.g. AMES). Moreover, the large education provider Chisholm, who is also a network member, has promoted the anti-racism support services with students studying English in their AMEP Program and with Chisholm's Student Support and Engagement Department who distributed the information across Chisholm's broader study areas. Further roll-out of these sessions are currently being explored.

While the four lead organisations (as well as some other network organisations) in the Southeast Network delivered these education and awareness raising individually, they also collaborated extensively. SMRC, for example, took the lead in drafting PowerPoint slides for these sessions, with the input from other organisations; this 'info slide pack' was then shared and used by other network organisations. When external requests for an info session were received (often sent to VU), the four lead organisations organised internally which of them would deliver the session on behalf of the network.

Overall, the various information sessions delivered in the southeast directly reached around **800-900 people**. As many of these sessions were delivered to service providers and sought to build awareness among their community facing staff and encourage them to share this information through their daily work in the community, these promotion activities have likely had a much broader effect, although the exact number of community members reached cannot be determined.

Wyndham Network

Wyndham CEC has not only trained all its 120 staff (see above) but has also been very active in raising awareness of racism and anti-racism protection in Victoria as well as promoting the local anti-racism support network across various communities and local stakeholders. This includes information sessions, organised by the Wyndham CEC anti-racism coordinator, as well as presentation at events organised externally. The session and presentations reached a significant number of racialised local community member (approx. 280) and various service providers and other local stakeholders (approx. 180-200), such as, for example:

- over 100 principals and/or assistant principals from all public schools in Wyndham
- 35 staff at the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- 8 staff at Jullia Gillard Community College
- welfare team at St Peters the Apostle Primary School
- 17 staff at Micare
- two community sessions held by Junubi for South Sudanese and other African community members (approx. N=55 in total)
- council staff

- 80 community members attending an intercultural dinner event
- Over 150 community members of racialised background at a local Cultural Diversity Week event
- 25 community members (including five youth) at the South Sudanese Equatorian Women Self-Care group

Whittlesea Network

In Whittlesea, WCC also took steps to raise the awareness of anti-racism rights, the local anti-racism support network and it services among community members and community-facing service providers. Internally, WCC has integrated information about anti-racism and anti-racism support in some of their community programs, such as their Citizenship courses. Together with the network member Melbourne Polytechnic, WCC delivered information sessions to several classes (reaching around 40 people) and presented about the network at the Melbourne Polytech's Belonging Fest to an audience of over 100 people. They also ran an info session for a locally based Libyan Women's group (N=10), co-facilitated (with VU) a training session for around 15 local volunteer coordinators and community leaders and co-presented to the North-East Melbourne Area Local Site Executive Committee. Assisting WCC in these promotion efforts, the VU team also engaged with the Whittlesea School Focused Youth Service Coordinator, who shared information about the anti-racism network through their newsletter among local schools (Image 1), as well as gave several presentations to representatives of several local primary and secondary schools, organized through the Whittlesea Hume and Merri-bek (WHAM) Wellbeing Network.

Image 1: Whittlesea School Focused Youth Service Newsletter (April 2025)

Whittlesea Anti-racism Support Network & Anti-racism (Victoria University):

The **Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network** was established in 2023 to address racism occurring across all areas of life in Whittlesea, including schools. The network is coordinated by Whittlesea Community Connections and brings together several local community organisations as well as education and public health service providers. Since 2025, the network provides qualified and advocacy-oriented anti-racism support, as well as legal advice and referral services in a culturally safe environment. It also records reported cases of racism in order to develop local evidence on racism. If you or anyone you know has experienced racism or discrimination and would like support in the outer north of Melbourne, please contact **Emma Antonetti** (Whittlesea Community Connections) via email (eantonetti@whittleseacc.org.au)

You can find more information about this network and anti-racism support in Victoria on this website: https://antiracismvictoria.com.au/support-services/

As the elaboration above demonstrate, many of these information and awareness raising sessions were delivered in **collaboration with a range of community organisation and other local stakeholders** outside the networks themselves. Existing networks and contacts have been utilised and have often deepened throughout this project, and open discussions around racism have become more normalised within these organisations.

In addition to these network-run sessions aimed at promoting anti-racism rights and the local anti-racism services, the VU team has share information about these networks in a series of around 20 capacity building workshops among around 300 staff from different local councils (many of them from the Northern suburbs) and at trainings and workshops for representatives from community groups and service providers, including an online training session for

volunteer managers and coordinated, organised by Volunteering Victoria. In September 2025, VU also presented to around 30 community members about the anti-racism support at an African community meeting, organised by Junubi, one of the Wyndham network organisations, in collaboration with Wyndam CEC. In December 2025, VU also ran a leadership training for DPV Health (around 25 staff) on anti-racism, which including information on Victoria's anti-racism legal provisions, statutory services and the local support of the Whittlesea Network. More of these trainings for DPV Health staff are currently being planned. VU has also been commissioned to deliver a series of around 10-12 similar trainings to council staff and community representatives in early 2026 (estimated 180-200 participants).

Based on the numbers provided, these training and awareness and information sessions directly reached estimated 1,500-2,000 community members, including a range of local service providers, many of whom further helped raise awareness of the networks among their clients from various communities affected by racism.

Promotion material

All three networks have created (with support by VU) and distributed network specific (hardcopy and softcopy) brochures, flyers and posters (Image 2), which have been distributed during various information sessions (see above). Local service providers and other organisations such as local libraries and community hubs have subsequently offered to share and display these flyers and posters. The Wyndham CEC representative noted, for example, that promotion posters were distributed or displayed 'at community centres, at the police stations.' The promotion materials (flyers and posters) for the Whittlesea and the Southeast Network were translated into several community languages other than English (five community languages in Whittlesea; and 12 community languages in the southeast); this was organised internally by some of the network lead organisations, utilising the multilingual skills of their staff.

Image 2 below shows some of this promotion material for each of the three networks. All materials contain recognisable network branding and logos, which have been created at the beginning of the pilot project. It is worth noting that the Southeast Network logo was designed by a local primary school student; it was selected out of over 200 logo design submissions from students in a competition at Barton Primary School (which the local newspaper reported about; Li 2025)[3]. The Southeast Network also used network pins to further promote the network.

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[3] https://dandenong.starcommunity.com.au/news/2025-01-02/new-anti-racism-logo-for-southeast/

Image 2: Promotion flyers and posters

Top flyer (Southeast)

Anti-racism in Melbourne's southeast

Support services and reporting pathways
for people who have experienced racism

For more information about anti-racism support in Victoria, visit: https://antiracismvictoria.com.au/

There are different places in Victoria where people can speak out against racism, report it and get support after an experience of racism. But it is not always easy to find the 'right' service.

This booklet offers some guidance, especially for those who live or spend a lot of time in Melbourne's southeast.

Local support services in the southeast

The southeast of Melbourne is one of three areas in Victoria served by a specialised community-led anti-racism support network.

The **Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network** covers Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia.

It offers a safe space for people who have faced racism to share their experiences in a supportive environment and jointly explore next steps. The network also anonymously documents reported cases of racism (if consent is provided) to develop local evidence on racism.

Contact any of the following to get support

Wellsprings for Women
Contact person: Samar Geid
Telephone: 03 97013740
Email: samar@wellspringsforwomen.com
Address: 79 Langhorne Street, Dandenong

Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre (SMRC)
Contact person: Sharon Smith
Telephone: 03 9767 1902
Email: sharons@smrc.org.au
Address 39 Clow St, Dandenong

Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
Contact person: Ayuel Mading
Telephone: 03 8594 1550
Mobile: 0428 760 849
Email: amading@cmy.net.au
Address: GF 243 Lonsdale St, Dandenong

South East Community Links (SECL)
Contact person: Ruwanthi Mudannayaka
Telephone: 03 9791 8344
Email: rmudannayaka@secl.org.au
Address: 176 Foster Street East, Dandenong

For free and confidential mental health support you can contact:

Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Greater Dandenong
Telephone: 03 8908 1800
Email: DandenongLocal@mindaustralia.org.au
Address: 29B Langhorne St, Dandenong

***

In addition to these local anti-racism support services, several state-wide agencies and organisations may also be able to provide assistance.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

VEOHRC provides general information and referrals, and offers free, impartial conciliation (mediation) if the incident constitutes unlawful discrimination.

Call **1300 292 153** (Mon-Fri, 10am-2 pm)
email: complaints@veohrc.vic.gov.au
Anonymous reporting: scan the QR code

For more information, visit the VEOHRC website https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/race/

Victoria Police

Only Victoria Police can investigate alleged crimes in Victoria. If racism or religious prejudice played a role in the crime, the police should treat it as a 'prejudice motivated crime'.

If it is an emergency, call 000.

Otherwise report to your local police station or call the Police Assistance Line: 131 444

For anonymous reporting call Crimestoppers (1800 333 000).

To anonymously notify police about anti-social behaviour on public transport, text the word STOPIT to 0499 455 455.

Support services for First Nations people

13YARN Crisis Support Hotline
An Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander crisis support line run by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.
Call 13 92 76

Call it Out Register (online reporting)
To report online, scan the QR code.

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
VALS provides free legal information, referrals, advice and casework assistance to First Nations people.
Call 039418 5999

Support services for Muslim communities

Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)
ICV's Islamophobia Support Service is a free community service dedicated to providing information and holistic support for those impacted by Islamophobia.
Call 03 9328 2067
email: islamophobiasupport@icv.org.au

Islamophobia Register Australia
A nationwide platform for incidents of Islamophobia to be reported, recorded and analysed into a published report.
To report online, scan the QR code.

Reporting antisemitism

Victorian Community Security Group (CSG)
CSG can be contacted to report an incident of antisemitism.
Call 1300 000 274

This flyer is part of a project coordinated by Victoria University. The project is supported with funding from the Victorian Government as part of a suite of programs to tackle racism and vilification in Victoria. For further information please see: www.vic.gov.au/victorias-anti-racism-strategy-2024-2029

Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network flyer

Otherwise call the Police Assistance Line: 131 444

Or report to your local police station:
- Werribee Police Station: 134-140 Princes Hwy, Werribee
- Wyndham North Police Station: 610 Sayers Rd, Tarneit

To report anonymously:
Call Crimestoppers: 1800 333 000.

Support services for Muslim communities
Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV)
ICV's Islamophobia Support Service is a free community service dedicated to providing information and holistic individual support for those impacted by Islamophobia.
Email: islamophobiasupport@icv.org.au
Call: 03 9328 2067

Your Islamophobia Register Australia
A nationwide platform for incidents of Islamophobia to be reported, recorded and analysed into a published report. To report online, scan the QR code.

Action Against Islamophobia (AAI)
A nationwide service to report incidents of anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism; option of anonymous reporting. AAI also offers support and can suggest next steps. To report online, scan the QR code.

Reporting antisemitism
Victorian Community Security Group (CSG) CSG can be contacted to report an incident of antisemitism.
Call: 1300 000 274

Support services for First Nations people
13YARN Crisis Support Hotline
An Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander crisis support line run by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.
Call: 13 92 76

Call It Out Register (online reporting)
To report online, scan the QR code.

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
VALS provides free legal information, referrals, advice and casework assistance to First Nations people.
Call: 039418 5999

This flyer is part of a project coordinated by Victoria University. The project is supported with funding from the Victorian Government as part of a suite of programs to tackle racism and vilification in Victoria. For further information please see: www.vic.gov.au/victorias-anti-racism-strategy-2024-2029

We acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners of the lands known as Victoria and Australia.

Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network

Support services & reporting pathways
For people who have experienced racism

For more information about anti-racism support in Victoria, visit: www.antiracismvictoria.com.au

SCAN ME

ANTI-RACISM SUPPORT poster (red)

ANTI-RACISM SUPPORT

EXPERIENCING RACISM? NEED SUPPORT?

The Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network provides a safe space to report racism, seek support, and access resources. Local and culturally safe support.

How We Can Help:
- Listen to your experience in a safe, supportive space
- Help you report racism to services like VEOHRC or the police if needed
- Connect you with legal, emotional, and advocacy support

Other Support Services We Can Help You Reach:
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)
- Victoria Police
- First Nations Support: 13YARN
- Islamophobia Support: Islamic Council of Victoria
- Reporting Antisemitism: Community Security Group
- and more

Contact us at:
- Wellsprings for Women – 03 9701 3740 | samar@wellspringsforwomen.com
- Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre – 03 9767 1902 | sharons@smrc.org.au
- Centre for Multicultural Youth – 03 8594 1550 | amading@cmy.net.au
- South East Community Link – 03 9791 8344 | rmudannayaka@secl.org.au

Visit https://antiracismvictoria.com.au/ to learn more.
The Southeast Anti-Racism Support Network acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

Wyndham booklet (bottom left)

There are different places in Victoria where people can speak out against racism, report it and get support after an experience of racism.

This booklet offers basic guidance, especially for those who live, work and play in or around Wyndham.

Local support services in Wyndham

Wyndham is one of three areas in Victoria where people can access a specialised community-led anti-racism support network.

The Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network offers a safe space for people who have faced racism to share their experiences in a supportive environment and jointly explore next steps.

The network also anonymously documents reported incidents of racism (if consent is provided) to develop local evidence on the prevalence of racism in our community.

Have you been treated unfairly because of your skin colour, language, religion or background?

Would you like to speak about it and get support?

Please reach out to a member of the *Wyndham Anti-Racism Support Network.*

Wyndham Community and Education Centre
Coordinator of the anti-racism support network
Email: warsn@wyndhamcec.org.au
Call: 03 9742 4013
Address: 20 Synnot St, Werribee 3030

MiCare
Support for newly arrived refugees and migrants
Email: intake@micare.com.au
Phone: 1300 928 223
Address: Unit 2-5, 2-14 Station Place, Werribee

Junubi Wyndham
Support for African Australian communities
Email: junubi@wyndhamcec.org.au
Call: 03 9742 4013
Address: 20 Synnot Street, Werribee

Pasifika Community of Australia Inc
Support for Pasifika communities
Email: info@pasifikacomaust.com.au

WEstjustice
Free and confidential legal advice and assistance for people in Melbourne's west on a range of everyday problems.
Email: admin@westjustice.org.au
Phone: 03 9749 7720
More information: www.westjustice.org.au

In addition to these local services, some state-wide agencies and organisations may also be able to assist.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

Provides general information and referrals, and offers free, impartial conciliation (mediation) if the incident constitutes unlawful discrimination.

Call 1300 292 153 (Mon-Fri, 10am-2 pm)
email: complaints@veohrc.vic.gov.au

To report anonymously, scan the QR code:

For more information, visit the VEOHRC website - www.humanrights.vic.gov.au

Victoria Police
Only Victoria Police can investigate crimes in Victoria. If racism or religious prejudice played a role, the police should record it and treat it as a 'prejudice motivated crime'.
If it is an emergency, call 000.

ANTI-RACISM SUPPORT poster (Whittlesea)

ANTI-RACISM SUPPORT

If you have experienced racism or discrimination and would like help with:

- **Telling your story** and getting the right supports
- **Reporting the incident** to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, Islamic Council of Victoria or other service
- **Legal information**

Please contact Whittlesea Community Connections:
Ph: 9401 6666
Address: Shop 111 Pacific Epping, Epping, Victoria, 3076
whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au/community-services/make-a-referral

Whittlesea Community Connections

Whittlesea Community Connections acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

Website and social media

It was one of the deliverables of this pilot project to set up a new website that provides easily accessible information about anti-racism, including central support services and reporting pathways for people experiencing racial or religious discrimination, vilification or prejudice motived crimes in Victoria. This website also plays an important role in the promotion of the three local anti-racism support networks and their services.

The website https://antiracismvictoria.com.au/ was launched on 12 February 2025 under the banner *Speaking out against racism: More than just reporting it* (Image 3). On the entry page (which is also available in Vietnamese, Arabic and Simplified Chinese) it contains a brief introductory overview as well as a regularly updated news section (currently English only) and tabs to navigate to the three main content pages:

- Support Services (also available in Vietnamese, Arabic and Simplified Chinese)
- Resources
- Contact

Image 3: New website (homepage)

The *Support Services* page offers basic information and contact details for the three anti-racism support networks as well as other state-wide services and support specifically for First Nations, Muslim and Jewish communities in Victoria (Image 4). As of 12 December 2025, the website has attracted around 2,000 unique users (the majority of them from Melbourne) performing over 12,000 events (e.g. clicks) including around 130 document downloads – with a noticeable increase in unique user numbers and engagement since October 2025. The most popular pages have been the entry homepage itself (1.9k views) and the *Support Services* page (1.5k views).

To further promote the three networks as well as the website, the LinkedIn account *Antiracism Victoria* was set up in May 2025. It currently counts 503 followers (most of them from Greater Melbourne) and has recorded around 13,000 impressions and around 360 reactions between May and mid-December.

Image 4: New website: Support Services page

In addition, most lead network organisations frequently use their own social media accounts (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook) to post about issues related to (anti-)racism and in particular about the support services they provide as part of their role in the anti-racism support networks. The majority of these lead organisations, including SMRC, SECL, Wellsprings and Wyndham CEC, have also create a specific page on their websites where they promote the new anti-racism support services:

SMRC	https://smrc.org.au/news/standing-against-racism-with-the-southeast-anti-racism-network/
Wellsprings	https://www.wellspringsforwomen.com/anti-racism-support/
SECL	https://secl.org.au/wellbeing/anti-racism-network/
Wyndham CEC	https://wyndhamcec.org.au/community-services/wyndham-anti-racism-support-network/

Several local councils, for example, Whittlesea[4] and Casey[5], also include links to the local networks on their anti-racism webpages. The cross-council anti-racism booklet, developed by the Cities of Hume, Merri-bek, Darebin and Whittlesea, lists the Whittlesea Anti-Racism Support Network as one of the key providers of support in the Norther suburbs (Image 5).

Image 5: Cross-council anti-racism booklet
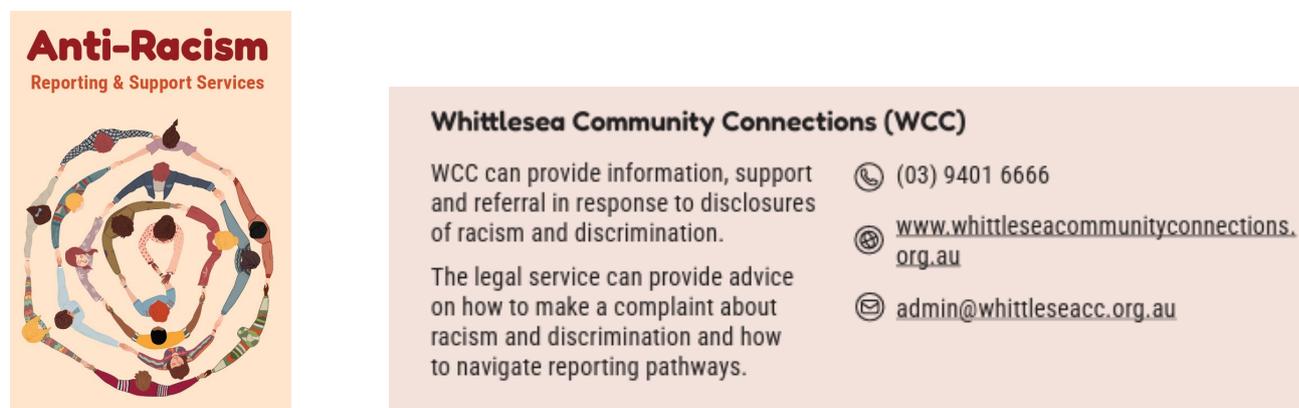
Media, public newsletters and other public promotion activities

The three networks have also been promoted through public newsletters and media reports. The local *STAR Community* newspaper in the southeast not only reported about the 'new anti-racism logo' (January 2025; Li 2025) for the Southeast Network but also ran a longer story, entitled 'Safe spaces to report racist acts' in May 2025 (Foladi 2025)[6], featuring the work of the Southeast Network, represented by Samar Geid from Wellsprings for Women (Image 6a).
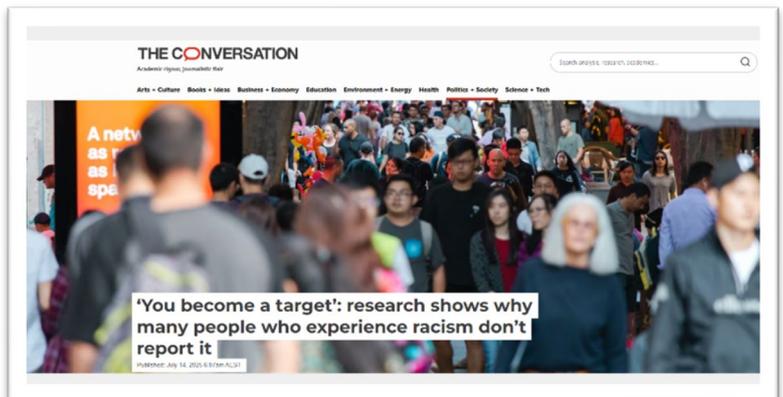
In July 2025, the VU team published an article in *The Conversation* discussing their research on underreporting of racism. The article, which has recorded around 6,000 reads as of December 2025, mentioned (and included an online link to) the website about the three local anti-racism support networks (Image 6b). In addition, the networks have been featured in public newsletters, such as the *African Women's and Family Network eNews*, which first covered the kick-off of the southeast anti-racism network in their January 2025 edition, followed by more extensive coverage of all three local networks and their services in April 2025 (Image 7) and an article about the anti-racism website in July 2025.

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[4] https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/Services/Support-for-people/Standing-together-against-racism
[5] https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/anti-racism-support-casey
[6] https://cranbournenews.starcommunity.com.au/news/2025-05-10/safe-spaces-to-report-racist-acts/

Image 6a and 6b: Media coverage of Southeast Network

Safe spaces to report racist acts

10/05/2025

Samar Geid, communications coordinator at Wellsprings for Women, which is part of the anti-racism network. (Gary Sissons: 476487)

THE CONVERSATION

'You become a target': research shows why many people who experience racism don't report it

What can be done?

Our research shows racism often goes undetected and unreported due to systemic and cultural barriers. As a result, injustice remains unchallenged and normalised.

But communities are finding alternative ways of speaking out against racism, often outside formal reporting channels.

Following our research, for example, three local community-led anti-racism support networks have been set up in parts of Victoria to complement the existing support and reporting system.

Image 7: *AWFN eNews promoting the networks (April 2025)*

To reduce these barriers, three local **community-led anti-racism support networks** have been established across Melbourne, in the outer west (Wyndham), outer north (Whittlesea) and the south-east (Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia). These new support networks offer a safe space for people who have faced racism to share their experiences in a supportive environment and jointly explore next steps. These network also anonymously document reported incidents of racism (if consent is provided) to develop local evidence on the racism in our community, which will help advocate for justice and change and develop targeted anti-racism actions.

ANTI-RACISM SUPPORT

Check out the new website.

In November 2025, Wellsprings for Women held a special public event to raise awareness of racism and promote the southeast anti-racism network. They collaborated with the theatre company Melbourne Playback to bring to the stage a unique performance, entitled 'Unscripted Voices Against Racism', where real-life cases of racism, as documented by Wellsprings, were re-enacted. People from the audience were then encouraged to intervene as upstanders, becoming 'unscripted' participants on stage. Around 150 people attended the experiential participatory theatre performance, which was also featured in the local *Star Community* newspaper (Foladi 2025b).[7]

Delivering anti-racism services and documentation

The three networks have been tasked to offer qualified and advocacy-oriented anti-racism support and referral advice in a culturally safe environment and to systematically record reported cases of racism. This section discusses in more detail *how* the networks have provided these services. This includes questions around how community members who faced racism typically connect with these services and what kind of support has been offered as well as issues related to the recording of disclosed cases of racism.

Establishing contact – connecting with services

While community members who seek anti-racism support connect with the services in different way, the majority of them – and that applies across all three networks – have had previous links with the respective lead organisation. This seems to be shifting slowly as the networks continue to promote themselves more widely, also through other local stakeholders, and become more known in the community.

Southeast Network

In the Southeast Network, many of those who reported an experience of racism to Wellsprings for Women, for example, did so in the context of the various anti-racism related information and education sessions that Wellsprings ran for their clients as part of different classes and programs. These sessions encouraged many participants to share their experiences afterwards with Wellsprings staff in a safe environment, and some of them were keen to formally report their experiences.

While SECL representatives noted that there are in principle 'a lot of entry points to SECL' (e.g. drop-in, phone call), frontline staff, who have all received capacity building training as part of the pilot project, have played a particularly important role: 'Most of the frontline staff, whether it's community wellbeing, settlements or financial counselling … they do provide that support.'

At CMY, those who have accessed anti-racism support usually have prior links to the organisation. As outlined above, CMY has delivered a series of community information sessions promoting their anti-racism support services among youth and parents. Some community members formally reported experiences of racism during or immediately after one of these sessions. Outside of these sessions, getting in contact with CMY is generally a rather informal process, facilitated by preexisting connections. The CMY representative explained: 'The people in the community who normally come to us, who are targeted, they report it to us,

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[7] https://dandenong.starcommunity.com.au/entertainment/2025-11-23/acting-out-against-racism/

they always come'. He further noted that those who seek support are then 'usually directly connected with me.'

Whittlesea Network

In the Whittlesea Network, WCC has received reports of racism mainly from existing clients who disclose their experiences with WCC staff, often in the settlement services team, who have been trained to provide support. The staff who manages each case can draw on the expertise and support of others in the WCC anti-racism working group (e.g. legal services). The WCC anti-racism coordinator stated:

> Reports come through different means, largely through the settlement services because they are working directly with newly arrived migrants and refugees. So, they hear these stories very often. … Part of their role is to let communities know they are here to listen and provide a safe space and provide information about what they can do in response. And in terms of the internal working group and the community work, we support each other through secondary consults, so we help each other to give clients the best information.

While this is the most common pathway for community members to access the anti-racism support services, WCC also noted that a few people 'cold call': 'Some people have googled us and told us, this is what happened to me, what can I do about it?'

Wyndham Network

In Wyndham, where the lead organisation Wyndham CEC has invested a lot of effort in promoting the network and in training all staff to be able to respond to disclosures of racism, the support services were accessed in different ways, both by already existing client and community members previously not connected to the organisation. Asked about how people have contacted the network, the Wyndham CEC anti-racism coordinator explained:

> It's been a combination. Some were already connected to our services, and there were others completely off the street. They googled who they can reach out to locally and because we did all the posts on social media and asked others in the network to do the same, but also distributed posters at community centres, at the police stations, people have come across it and seen it and then call our head office, and they then put them through to me.

Support services offered

At a minimum, the networks are expected to provide basic emotional support and referral advise. It was made clear, and agreed on by all network lead organisations, from the outset that a more resource-intensive case management approach would be beyond the scope of the anti-racism services the networks can currently offer. The experience during the first year of operation indicated that the support by the network organisations not only met but often exceeded these minimum expectations.

All network lead organisations highlighted the importance and centrality of providing **empathetic, emotional support, validation and a safe space** where people can speak openly and feel understood. This was often identified as the primary need of those who share and report an experience of racism. All networks effectively provided this support, sometimes

in combination with other forms of assistance (see below). The following statements from representatives of network lead organisation illustrate that.

Sometimes we refer them to other organisations that can provide immediate kind of support that they need … but otherwise we just provide that support – talking to them, understand, and encourage them to speak out and stand firm. That is the kind of support and encouragement we give (CMY)

To be able to express that feeling was huge. To be able to be heard was huge… It was a lot around recognition that I'm being heard. But again, that reluctance to take it to that next step. But often just listening alleviates some of that pressure. And we continue to do that now. It's part of our assessment (SMRC).

Another incident, involving a community member, not linked to our services, … called us and said he just wanted to talk about it. He was spat at in the face in the street. He was shocked. So, I offered counselling, but he also wanted the validation, someone who says that's not okay. And that made him feel good at the end. He needed someone to reinforce that's not okay (Wyndham CEC)

Most of the people whom I have talked to or have heard of … they just loved to hear you validate the experience and then they welcome it, welcome the discussion. But other than that, they did not necessarily want to take any further action. It's often more about validating their experiences (SECL)

The support we provide is quite varied, but yes, just to tell their story to someone who's gonna listen. It's … the way of telling their stories in a safe environment (WCC).

While this basic emotional support and validation was crucial, the network organisations also provided advice on what next steps the person could take and where they could report to or get more specialised help. Sometimes the organisation offered **referral advice**; in other cases, they actively assisted the person in reporting to these external agencies and support services, for example by making phone calls and reporting on behalf of their client.

The WCC anti-racism coordinator noted that they typically discuss potential next steps that clients who experienced racism can take. She highlighted the importance of 'knowing how and where to report, where can I go, who can I write a letter to, knowing where some of the referral pathways are… [so we are also] providing information about the Commission or about ICV'. The CMY representative also noted that 'sometimes we refer them to other organisations that can provide immediate kind of support that they need', and the SMRC representative stated that

> we would encourage them to do that formal report. It may be the point where we may need to refer them to the police. So, you're looking at the agencies that could take it if it was quite alarming, if it was affecting them, and if it was a risk situation, definitely. We would refer them to external providers.

The Wyndham CEC anti-racism coordinator noted that she had reported incidents to external agencies on behalf of a client:

> In some cases, they do want us to report on their behalf. So, I complete the report to VEOHRC, I also contacted the local council … where it happened. So, it depends. Sometimes we do that, sometimes they lodge the report themselves, but we always tell them to come back if they need further assistance.

She further recalled on case of 'police abuse of power, targeting one of our colleagues'.

> I asked him where he would like to report it to. I told him there are many options, and he said: 'All of them.' So, I documented it internally, but we also reported it to VEOHRC. I also linked him to legal support services, so they could make a formal complaint about police.

As these experiences around service provision indicate, it was not uncommon that the networks provide more direct support and take **further follow-up action**, which sometimes resembles more resource-intensive case management beyond what was initially expected from these services. This follow-up support can take on different forms. In some cases, it related to managing the reporting process to an external agency or seeking to resolve the racist incident. In other cases, it was more about regular emotional wellbeing check-ins or providing further assistance after an experience of racism (e.g. 'community transport' or food relief for clients traumatised by a racist experience).

The Wellsprings representatives from the Southeast Network noted that they often follow up with their clients after they disclosed experiences of racism and assist them in reporting:

> We had a couple of cases where they wanted to report. So, we did that. It was a lengthy exercise and process because it takes time and it's really not as user friendly as you think, reporting to the human rights commission. So, there was just automatic reply. And until now, this incident in particular has been almost five months, I would say. We only had two cases where they reported to the human rights commission, and they still – as of now – haven't heard back yet.

The Wyndham Network coordinator also spoke about providing follow-up wellbeing support, either via text messages or in-person.

> For those who only needed counselling, after I asked for their consent to make a referral, and he said yes, we have some back-and forth text messages. Whereas with the colleague of mine, who reported an incident, I checked in regularly. He said: 'You are really helping us.'

The Whittlesea Network has taken further steps, in some cases providing more extensive support or taking actions to resolve a racist incident that happened at a local sporting club. The WCC anti-racism coordinator highlighted the need for flexible support responses depending on the specifics of the individual case and what the individual person seeks. Stressing the importance of offering a place where people can share their experience and 'tell their stories in a safe environment', she noted: 'We had other kinds of support that people needed, for example, food relief or community transport where people are too fearful of leaving home [after a racist incident] and needed other kinds of welfare support. And legal support was also needed something, but not so common'.

She also mentioned on case, involving a WCC client who reported an incident of racism at a local sporting club. In response, the coordinator wrote a letter to the club raising the issue and suggesting ways to mitigate risks for similar racist incidents to occur in the future.

> I reached out to them about doing training for the club and for the people on the committee, and they just emailed yesterday and said they'd be keen to do that in the lead-up to the new season. So, wherever we can, we try to follow up so it does not end with the report, but we increase opportunities for education.

Overall, the three networks have all demonstrated that they deliver, at a minimum, the emotional support and, where relevant, referral advice that they were set up to provide. The experiences in the networks, however, highlight practical and ethical considerations not to limit their anti-racism support to this minimum standard. As a consequence, most organisations have gone significantly beyond this basic assistance and taken further active steps and follow-up support – which has required additional resources.

Documentation and informal reporting of experiences with racism

In addition to offering support and referral advice, the third central task of the new anti-racism networks is to set up a platform to systematically record disclosed cases of racism with the medium or long-term goal of developing locally specific evidence on the scope and nature of racism. To prepare the networks to fulfil this role as a community reporting platform, VU developed, in collaboration with the networks, a centrally hosted, short online reporting tool and trained relevant staff across the three networks in how to use this recording tool as part of their service delivery (see above section on capacity building training).

All network lead organisations have successfully used this online documentation system during the pilot project to record cases of racism disclosed to them by community members, and all of them considered it helpful and practical. A SECL representative, for example, described it as 'very easy, straightforward and quick' and the coordinator of the Wyndham Network stated, 'it's simple, it gets to the point of what happened. So, it's really helpful.'

In total, the three networks have formally recorded 52 cases of racism since they started to use the online documentation system for this project in early 2025. The numbers differ substantially between the three networks, which does not necessarily reflect local differences in the prevalence of racism. The Southeast Network, comprising four lead organisations, have recorded 41 reported incidents of racism, while the Wyndham Network and the Whittlesea Network recorded 7 and 4 cases respectively, using the online documentation portal.

The initial data show that the majority of those who formally reported an experience of racism to one of the networks are women. The social area most affected, according to an analysis of these reported cases, public spaces such as in the street, public transport and shopping centres as well as employment and in school settings (Graph 3).

When interpreting these initial statistics, it is important to keep in mind that the networks have been established less than a year ago and have only just started to record cases of racism. Another, more general caveat is that even well-established systems of complaint data systems only capture the 'tip of the iceberg', as the CMY representative put it, and are not suited to

accurately capture the objective prevalence of racism, although they can indicate hotspot areas.

Graph 3: Documented cases of racism
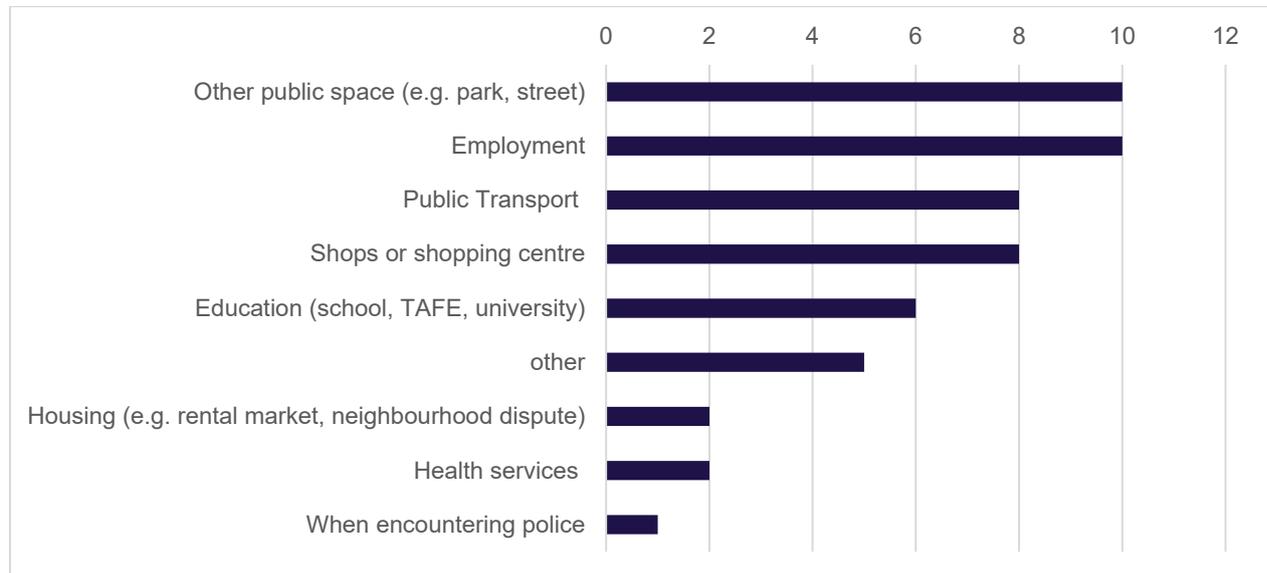
Importantly, representatives from all three networks highlighted that they have formally documented only a fraction of the racist incidents raised by community members in different contexts. In the Whittlesea Network, for example, the WCC settlement team pointed to 'almost daily' conversations with their clients about racist incidents they were subjected to, but these were usually not counted or documented, often because they were not considered a formal report. Even in those cases where clients received anti-racism support and were referred to an external agency (e.g. VEOHRC), the WCC anti-racism coordinator did not formally enter these cases in their documentation system 'because it felt like doubling up things' (if the same case would get recorded in more than one system). This applies to at least six cases in addition to the four formally documented by WCC. She noted:

> From a service point of view, it would be good if we used the documentation tool more often so that we can quantify the things that are happening in our local community. As evidence, whether it be for further funding or as support for particular prevention projects. We have probably not done the best for ourselves in terms of filling in the reports. We have focused more on what the community then wanted and needed.

Representatives from the other two networks also stressed that community members frequently mentioned personal experiences of racism, but that many or even most of these informally shared cases are not being entered into the documentation system. Wyndham CEC, for example, noted that during an information session with around 20 young African-Australians, more than three quarters stated that they had recently faced racism. But there was no time during the session to properly document these experiences.

Similarly, in the Southeast Network, the CMY representative shared that many young people who participated in their antiracism information sessions, 'have highlighted a lot of racism they experienced in public places, such as on public transport, schools, shopping centres,

workplaces and other related areas where people converged'. But most of these cases were not entered into the documentation system. Wellsprings representatives also highlighted how prevalent racism was in the community, but that many incidents are not recorded because the network is supposed to document only recent cases:

> When we go and talk to all our participants in various classes, you could say that just about everybody would have had an incident happen in their life, but it wouldn't have been a recent one for us to record. And that was probably one of the limitations of the project: it's about what's happening within the timelines of the actual project. So, it's about recent incidents, but people are experiencing or have experienced racism every day in many settings.

All three networks identified as one of the challenges to find ways to capture more of the incidents of racism, including those that are already informally disclosed by community members. Some of the networks have started to trial, and learn from each other in exploring, more proactive ways to identify experiences of racism and include them in the documentation. One promising approach, currently tested by one of the networks, is to include questions around racism in the initial assessment/intake process. Another potential approach, suggested by several network organisations, is developing a very brief questionnaire for clients where they can share recent experiences of racism and request support from the networks. While these approaches are expected to lead to some improvement, representatives from all three networks acknowledged that systemic reporting barriers remain, such as concerns about low levels of accountability and prospects for change or fears of negative repercussion as a result of speaking out (secondary victimisation). The networks themselves alone are not in a position to comprehensively and effectively address these barriers, despite their capacity to provide safe spaces for reporting, emotional support and assistance with referrals and follow-up. However, they can play an important long-term role in raising awareness and advocating for change in the future, also and especially on the local level – drawing on local evidence collected through their documentation system.

In order to address some of the persistent reporting barriers and encourage more reporting, the networks co-developed, together with VU, several short resources, which have all been promoted and shared online and offline as well as made available on the *Antiracism Victoria* website. Three resources are currently available:

- *Joint Position Statement on Racism:* outlines the joint understanding of what racism is and how it manifests, co-drafted by the three networks
- *Why reporting an experience of racism to the local anti-racism support network*: a one-page flyer outlining why reporting racism is important, intended to encourage more people to speak out against racism and help those who support communities explain why it matters to report.
- *Racism in Victorian schools: how to speak out and get support*: a brief guide brief guide on how to speak out and report racism in schools and how to access support.

All three networks have successfully established accessible safe spaces for community members who have experienced racism to report it and get emotional support. They have all been able to provide qualified referral advice and systematically recorded disclosed cases of racism through an online documentation system. In doing so, they have demonstrated they have delivered anti-racism support in line with the project expectations. The services provided by the three networks have, however, gone in many cases well beyond this basic support as many of them have identified the need to engage in more resource-intensive follow-up activities and assistance for individual community members.

4. Conclusion: achievements and future challenges

Based on the evidence outlined above, this conclusion synthesises the evaluation findings against the backdrop of the aims (output and outcomes) of the project. It summarises key achievements as well as challenges and highlights other effects the project has had beyond the stated aims.

The overarching goal the project was, according to the theory of change, to encourage more people to speak out against racism, report it and access support. To achieve this goal, this project sought to

- **build the capacity** of local network organisations to provide information, basic support and referral services to those experiencing racism and/or vilification and to systematically record reported cases of racism, and
- **promote these local services** among the local communities affected by racism through communication engagement activities and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

These goals were operationalised though a series of outputs and outcomes, as formulated in the theory of change. The two tables below illustrates that these goals have all been reached.

Expected outputs	Achieved?	Notes
Building capacity within network organisations to fulfil their new role	✓	Capciaty building trainingsfor 40-45 staff, additional internal training for around 180 staff; establised internal processes
Engaging with local communities affected by racism to build trust in and awareness of new services	✓	Information and awareness raising sessions reaching around 1,500-2,000 people
Creating a recording template and process in compliance with privacy laws	✓	Online documentation system established and used by all networks
Development of promotion material for the new services across the three networks	✓	Various promotion material (flyers, posters) with network branding/logo developed and distributed
Creating and maintaining the _Antiracism Victoria_ website	✓	Website set up (partially multilingual) and regular updates; increasing user numbers and engagement

Expected outcomes	Achieved?	Notes
Expanding and consolidating networks of local community service providers and community organisations	✅	Three networks with clear leadership structure; consoldiated and operational; with additional members joining
Advancing the services of existing local anti-racism networks in Victoria to serve as local hubs and safe spaces for those experiencing racism	✅	Established safe space for reporting and support; and increasingly known support hubs
Building the capacity of existing networks (and the organisations involved) to provide information, basic support and referral services to those experiencing racism	✅	Capacity builing trainings for 40-45 staff, additional internal training for around 180 staff
Promoting new reporting and support services through campaigns and outreach events	✅	Multiple promotion efforts, including info sessions (reaching 1500-2,000), flyers/posters, website (2,000 users), social media

The three networks consolidated their membership and leadership structure in late 2024 and have since then operated as central local anti-racism support and reporting hubs, providing **advocacy-oriented anti-racism support and referral advice in a culturally safe environment and a documentation system to record reported cases of racism in order to develop local evidence on racism.**

Anti-racism support

The evaluation found that all three networks have developed the capacity to provide anti-racism support to community members who had experienced racism and who disclose these experiences to the network. They have all started to offer emotional support and validation in a culturally safe environment, and they assist in exploring next steps and referral options, where relevant.

While in many cases, this basic emotional support was all the person wanted, many network organisations identified the need to take further actions, exceeding the minimum level of support. The network organisations sometimes contacted external agencies on behalf of the person, provided follow-up support beyond the initial reporting, or even provided more extensive assistance such as food relief or engaging with the organisation where the racist incident occurred to develop prevention measures for the future. This kind of support, sometimes akin to case management, requires a lot more resources than what was initially envisaged as the networks' more basic one-off anti-racism support, but it was often seen as being necessary as the individual person required or requested further assistance.

Speaking out: Documentation and formal reporting

It was emphasised by all three networks from the outset that their anti-racism work should not be measures only by the number of documented cases during this pilot phase as it would take time to establish and promote the new services and build community trust in their efficacy. The foundations for a systematic and cross-network consistent documentation been laid (developing an online recording template; capacity building training), and all networks have started to formally record cases of racism disclosed to them by community members. As of December 2025, 52 cases were documented across the three networks, which the Southeast Network recording a significant number of 41 cases alone.

These 52 cases, formally recorded in the online documentation system, represent only a fraction of the many experiences of racism the networks were made aware of by local community members. During various promotion activities and information sessions delivered by the network organisations, many community members found an opportunity to share their experiences of racism and speak out, but most of these stories were not formally recorded. Even some of those cases where community members accessed the network's anti-racism support were not entered into the documentation system.

It has been identified as one of the challenges and future area of focus by the networks to find ways to capture more effectively cases of racism raised in the community and include them in the documentation system. Continuously promoting the networks in the community, also and especially beyond the circles of clients already connected to the organisations, remains an important task (see below), but the networks also considered other steps. Some of them, for example, have started (or were exploring to do so) to include questions around racism in the intake assessment for new clients. Moreover, it was highlighted by several network representatives that more people would feel encouraged to speak out and report to them if the networks could demonstrate that they can contribute to change and show tangible outcomes and steps towards greater accountability for racism. While it was acknowledged that the networks are not in a powerful position to ensure accountability in each individual case, they have highlighted that they can contribute through evidence-based advocacy. Enhancing the local documentation of racism and publicising this evidence, for example in an annual joint report by the anti-racism networks, was considered an important step to raise awareness, inform policymakers and other stakeholders and assist them in developing tailored prevention and intervention measures. The statement from the CMY anti-racism coordinator captures this link between documentation and advocacy for change:

> In the network we have been collecting data very well, but the question that is still on my mind is, what is being done with this information. Will we continue to collect and no solution? So, collecting the information, but what next? I was hoping we can find solutions once we have the information… I would like this project to continue and to continue recording the cases, file them and write a report and give it to the government and this evidence will then help the government to do something. That's what I want to see in the future.

Awareness raising and promoting the network's services

The networks have invested a significant amount of time and effort during the project to raise awareness around anti-racism and to promote themselves and their support services among community members and various local community service providers. This has contributed to normalising conversations about racism in the community and across various organisations within and outside the networks, opening up unprecedented opportunities for communities to speak about experiences of racism and to learn about anti-racism support.

The networks have reached at least 1,500-2,000 people directly through information sessions and other outreach activities, and many more online through the website (>2,000 unique users; 12,000 online engagements) and their social media activities (e.g. LinkedIn account with over 500 followers, almost 13,000 impressions). These promotion efforts have had positive effects in the community, as the CMY representative observed:

> The reception in the community is really positive. It has actually changed some of the people who were not sure what to do [after they face racism]. But thanks to the pilot project, they now have an idea of where to report and what they can do. So, the reception is 100% positive.

The coordinator of the Wyndham Network at Wyndham CEC also noted direct effects and an increased awareness as well as willingness to speak about racism. Asked about the changes in the level of awareness and trust in community, she said:

> It is slowly building up. I noticed more how it has been taking space. People are comfortable being themselves, that's a good step. Even before, when coming to the reception, they didn't seem comfortable, they looked down… I feel they are more comfortable now coming into the space, they feel more that we respect them and hear them. So that has been building up and from there they get more confidence to also raise race-related issues.

Despite this significant reach and success in promoting the anti-racism support services, network representatives stressed that ongoing promotion efforts were required to reach more community members, in particular those who are not already connected to the organisations. In response to the question as to whether the local communities are aware of the networks, the WCC representative, for example, said,

> There is still a bit of work to do. We are only really scratching the surface at the moment. We just have started this work, and this is long-term work for us because parts of the communities face a number of barriers in getting the information. We have to keep working… Obviously, it needs a lot more work around education and awareness raising. A lot more focus on that.

The anti-racism coordinator at Wyndham CEC responded in a similar way, specifically highlighted that many community members who face racism are not already connected to community centres:

> People don't access community centres that often… and well, we put it everywhere, but many are not connected to these centres. I asked council to promote more widely … I wish we could promote it more in public spaces, but I also know there is a lot of reluctance when it comes to the word 'racism'.

Ongoing promotion efforts, also in languages other than English, are crucial to expand the reach of the new services and make more people aware of the networks. Representatives from the networks have identified various ways in which this can be achieved, for example by working more directly with employers, local schools, and places of workshop, or running public awareness raising campaigns, for example, with public transport providers (Note: public transport was identified as a hotspot of racism in the Southeast Network).

Other internal changes and effects

While the evaluation was primarily focussed on the delivery and promotion of anti-racism support services by the three local networks, many of the network organisations have experienced a notable increase in their own awareness of racism as a result of their involvement in the project. For many of them, racism has become a more explicit consideration in the delivery of their other services such as settlement or (mental) health support. This applies to several of the network lead organisations as well as others network members such as DPV Health (Whittlesea), Micare (Wyndham and southeast) and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Local in Greater Dandenong.

Noting that for some of the organisations (e.g. Wellsprings, CMY) racism had already been an important topic in their work before 2024, most of them expressed the view that their organisational involvement in the project has significantly opened up spaces for more conversation around racism among the communities they reach and also internally with staff; the topic shifted much more into the centre of their work and was more openly discussed and addressed.

The WCC representative stated, for example:

> [The project] has definitely changed us as an organisation. We have become more aware of the issue and the impact on community and also the impact on staff, volunteers and students. We now have a process for when people experience that at work. There have been some internal impacts of that, and it has made us more aware of how big the problem is … and made us more committed to this kind of work.

She further elaborated how the project has reduced the reluctance within the organisation to address the issue and underscore the importance of creating safe spaces for community to speak out:

> The Project has 100% led to more conversations about racism with the community and within WCC. Absolutely. Before that we were probably a bit reluctant, a bit unsure about how community might react or that it might create more harm than doing good. But now, we found that people want to talk about it and want to share their experiences and want to talk about what we can do about it. Actually, we have been surprised by the reaction by community… this is definitely something we need to keep talking about.

The anti-racism network coordinator at Wyndham CEC noted internal changes as a result of their project involvement: 'Internally, people who work in our organisation can see that they are not alone, they see as an organization we support this work, and they can also carry that message outwards. They can talk about things that aren't very comfortable.'

In the southeast, the anti-racism coordinator at CMY similarly noted that 'also within CMY, the awareness of racism and anti-racism has increased. Everybody is aware of this … the project has had a positive impact, yes... Racism has become more [recognised as] a phenomenon we need to address every day'. With a reference to recent anti-immigration protests in late 2025, he added that there was 'a need for it especially now – to give communities the right information what they can do.' Wellsprings for Women, who had been involved in anti-racism work previously, highlighted how the project has drawn their focus on potentially more effective place-based anti-racism approaches: 'I think also what we've learned more and more is about the importance of local place-based work. We can affect change, we can see change with the people we are working with, interacting with, have a relationship with.'

Some network representatives also noted that, as a result of their involvement in the project, they have started to establish themselves as local anti-racism hubs and expert voices, which other organisations such as local council draw on and turn to for guidance. This occurred across all three networks. The Wyndham Network coordinator, for example, explained that

> other organisations look at us and know they can come to us as for advice. The council for example, they were like 'hold on a second, maybe we need the anti-racism network. We need their insights'. We discussed how we can support each other, can be allies… So, it is pushing us to be a lead in that space; it gives us the respect and recognition from external services. So, as an organisation it helps to uplift the profile of what we do.

Support services, documentation and promotion beyond the project

It was one of the indicators of success for the project to lay the 'foundation for sustainability of service'. This has been achieved as outlined in the sections above: The pilot project has enabled them to build the capacity, internal processes and expertise, as well as resources (e.g. logos, flyers, posters, website) and important collaborations within their network, external partnerships and a cross-network community of practice and exchange (Victorian Alliance of Anti-Racism Support Networks). All six lead organisations as well as some other network organisations declared their ongoing commitment to anti-racism and to continue providing anti-racism support for communities irrespective of future funding. Some have taken active steps to integrate anti-racism support into their general community services.

There was, however, also clear and unanimous consensus among all network representatives that the current level of anti-racism support and reporting service could only be sustained and further expanded with additional (and, ideally, longer-term) funding. Without additional resources, key elements of their anti-racism support could not be sustained in the future. This relates primarily to the following three areas:

- The need to continuously **promote** the services in the wider community, especially beyond their current clients
- Mutual learning, **coordination and collaboration** between the networks to strengthen and improve the services
- Continue or expanding the systematic **documentation** of racism to build local evidence, to demonstrate reliability and efficacy to their clients and community and engage in **advocacy**

The WCC representative, for example, highlighted the 'struggle' to sustain this work, which they have 'tried to integrate into what we are currently already doing, so we can do some of this antiracism support work more long term.' She also emphasised that additional resources would strengthen their capacity to advocate and be 'more vocal and more visible' and to offer 'opportunities to utilize the knowledge and skills in the sector a lot more', for example by collaborating more with key stakeholders such as VEOHRC or the Islamic Council of Victoria.

The Wyndham Network coordinator also emphasised that 'as an organisation, we [at Wyndham CEC] are committed to continue the work whether or not there is funding'. However, she argued,

> without funding it gets to the backburner, and that's what I don't want to see… the question is how much we can do for zero [dollars]. That concerns me. And without further support, we can't push for things to be more visible, to be out there, and member organisations may drop off if it is not coordinated… And we would need more time so we can really see the impact of it

Lead organisations of the Southeast Network also expressed concerns that, although they would not cease to provide anti-racism support, the services of the Network could not be fully maintained, and its impact could not continue to grow without additional resources. The representatives of Wellsprings expressed what others also mentioned: Time and resources have been invested to build the networks and their capacity to provide the support service, and the work only just started and is now 'gathering publicity':

> Establishing this network and the other networks as well took almost a couple of years since VU publicize their research and announce the findings [in 2023]. Since then, the work has been really hard to establish all of these connections and bring the network up and running… We just started and we really wanted to continue.

But without future funding, they would not be able to keep recording racism 'like we're doing' it now and they would lose the ability to advocate collectively as a network. The CMY representative similarly highlighted the need for collaboration in the future. Asked about the best-case scenario for the future, he stated: 'Just to continue as we have done the past year and collaborating with other organisations, it's not a one-man-job, needs to be done in collaboration.'

In concluding, the evaluation found that the project goals have all been achieved. The networks have been established and operate as planned, with services meeting and often exceeding the minimum expectations. Further reducing formal reporting barriers remains a complex challenge that local networks cannot resolve alone but play a crucial role in addressing locally.

Promoting anti-racism rights and support, both within and outside the three networks, needs to be ongoing and include regular updates in responses to legal, policy and other changes (e.g. anti-racism policy in schools, new anti-vilification protections, expanding community-based anti-racism support infrastructure). The foundation for the local anti-racism support has been laid, but the long-term potential of these networks, in relation to support, documentation and advocacy for change, will only manifest if they are enabled and resourced to continue operating and expanding.