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Racial discrimination

The development of human rights policy is one of the Department's key responsibilities, particularly in ensuring that domestic laws meet Australia's international obligations, including with respect to racial equality and preventing racial discrimination.

♦ Racial Discrimination Act

The *Racial Discrimination Act* prohibits discrimination on the basis of race in many areas of public life. These include in employment, renting or buying property, the provision of goods and services, accessing public places and in advertising. The Act also prohibits offensive behaviour based on racial hatred (racial vilification).

♦ Complaints of racial discrimination or vilification

The Department does not handle complaints of discrimination or vilification. If you have a discrimination or vilification complaint, contact the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Level 8, Piccadilly Tower
133 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 9284 9600
Complaints Infoline: 1300 656 419
www.humanrights.gov.au

The Commission can also provide more information about the Race Discrimination Act.

♦ International obligations

An important part of Australia's international obligations is Australia's regular appearance before committees of the United Nations to report on our progress on a range of human rights issues.

♦ 2005 appearance at UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In March 2005, Australia appeared before the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Attorney General's Department was represented in the Australian delegation because of its central role in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The committee's hearing process provides an opportunity for non-government organisations and human rights institutions to brief committee members on the progress of individual countries. Committee members then have the opportunity to raise issues of concern and interest. Delegations are given the chance to respond by providing more information, correcting misunderstandings and noting disagreement on some points.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination asked Australia's delegation a range of questions concerning Indigenous rights, the Native Title Act, the Australian Human Rights Commission, discrimination against Arab and Muslim Australians, Australia's legal and constitutional system, human rights education, the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, counter-terrorism laws, and multiculturalism and immigration policies.

Following Australia's appearance the Chair of the Committee congratulated Australia for the serious and comprehensive manner in which it had responded to the Committee's questions.

The Committee has published its conclusions, which include positive findings as well as noting areas of concern.

- [More information about the Committee](#)

Key Legislation

- [Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986](#)