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# Australian Human Rights Commission's National Anti-Racism Framework

## Intercountry Adoptee Consultation Input

InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV) - 3 April 2022

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## Introduction

The Australian Human Rights Commission has developed a Concept Paper for a National Anti-Racism Framework for which we gathered together online, to discuss and provide consultative input. We loosely followed the Consultation Guide provided by the Commission.

<b>Consultation Date:</b>	3 April 2022
<b>Location:</b>	Online
<b>Facilitator Name:</b>	Lynelle Long
<b>Organisation:</b>	InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV) <a href="http://www.intercountryadopteevoices.com">www.intercountryadopteevoices.com</a>
<b>No of Participants:</b>	19 with 5 apologies
<b>Location of Consultation:</b>	Online to facilitate involvement of adoptees who live through out Australia. We had adoptees attend from TAS, VIC, NSW, QLD, WA, and SA
<b>Countries of Origin represented:</b>	Vietnam, Sri Lanka, China, Haiti, Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, South Korea, Brazil, Hong Kong
<b>Demographics important to note:</b>	We had a couple of adoptees who have intersecting lived experience with disability
<b>Consultation Focus:</b>	To get input from lived experience of intercountry adoption and seek community priorities for an experience we live daily but gets little recognition. What makes our lived experience complex is that we are raised in “white Australian families” who do not understand racism exists; hence compounding our traumas from racism.

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**Main Themes Raised:**

The lack of recognition of our group to be included as one of the minority groups who live with racism - we are not refugees or immigrants but need to be named as intercountry and transracial adoptees. For government to realise the shared commonalities of our community with the Stolen Generation as many of our adoptions are forced and many of us are from minority ethnic groups within our birth countries, placed within white Australian families. The lack of depth and detail to deliver real outcomes in the proposed framework. The lack of true centring and elevation of Lived Experience with racism to inform this framework in depth. The need for deep education at all sectors of our community on what racism is and how it impacts people. The lack of success so far in this country to acknowledge racism or do anything substantial about it.

## Summary of Findings

Here we provide dot points summarising the key areas of feedback raised in our consultation.

Key Consultation Areas	Summary of Participants' Views
<b>Feedback on Proposal</b>	All of the participants felt the proposal was unhelpful in any real way to create lasting change. It felt tokenistic and that it hadn't been drawn from in-depth real life experience of racism in this country to deeply understand a broad range of experiences and how deeply embedded racism actually is within all facets of life.
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	Good in theory but too high level and unhelpful to know in practical reality how to deliver on anything substantial.
<b>National Outcomes</b>	Good in theory but very high level with no real measures or in depth plan to produce significant change.
<b>Existing Programs / Resources / Initiatives</b>	Nothing specifically exists for intercountry adoptees to support us in our racism experiences within Australia, but we have provided a list of resources that we know of as a good starting point: see <a href="https://intercountryadopteevoices.com/video-resource-for-professionals/race-resources/">https://intercountryadopteevoices.com/video-resource-for-professionals/race-resources/</a> ICAV also provides you with a Perspective Paper on <a href="#">Lived Experiences of Racism in Intercountry Adoption</a> to help the AHRC and Australian Government better understand. We recognise that unless we actively educate from our lived experience, it's a tough ask for government to fully understand and implement what is needed. We believe in proactive engagement and hope that any government programs, resources, and initiatives will always actively consult lived experience to ensure it's going to meet our community needs.
<b>Challenges and enablers to work on anti racism</b>	Our largest challenges is having Australian society acknowledge that racism exists, coming to terms with its historical roots, and openly educating about it like we do about domestic violence or sexual abuse. It is as much of a violence and we need the impacts to be fully recognised and supported with appropriate funding. We see our community willingness as a huge enabler to work on anti racism initiatives.
<b>Vision for a more equal harmonious future in Australia</b>	We hope for a country where tolerance and acceptance is imbued in every facet of our lives for all peoples, where being 'othered' is discouraged and where racism and the inherent colonial structures that uphold it, are made visible and educated about, as part of our daily life and upbringing.
<b>Connecting with our Community with the AHRC</b>	Yes please. Intercountry adoptees in Australia want to be engaged with the AHRC.

Key Consultation Areas	Summary of Participants' Views
Next Steps	<p>AHRC, please continue to consult with us.</p> <p>At ICAV, we intend to do a live webinar this year, to educate on the lived experience of Racism as intercountry adoptees.</p> <p>Our Perspective Paper on <u>Lived Experience of Racism in Intercountry Adoption</u> was also put together as part of ICAV's Next Steps to educate and inform.</p>

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## Questions & Disagreements

There were no areas of significant disagreement between participants, on the contrary - the group was very cohesive and supportive of each other upon hearing each others input. I feel that this is because our group has quite a unique experience and insight into racism in Australia because we straddle the in-betweenness that racism brings into focus: - we are culturally raised to be white in mentality, but yet we are immediately judged by our outward racial appearance. This causes many of us to live complex identity confusions because we are not accepted by either of our groups for belonging. White Australians judge us as not belonging with them, our birth country people assume by our mannerisms and language that we are not belonging with them. At the crux, racism questions our belongingness and hence, we intercountry adoptees - straddle the two worlds and can experience racism and reverse racism.

We can also grow up ashamed of our racial beginnings and become racist ourselves because of our white upbringing. This duality of being part of both but never really belonging to either gives us a unique perspective and insight into how racism manifests, the subtleness and overt nature it can be, and given we are raised mentally white, we can give unique insight that other groups like refugees and migrants live who go home to a family who mirrors them racially and can share their generational knowledge of how to cope with racism and receive validation.

Other groups who input into this forum who live with and are raised by people who mirror them, have a space where they can feel safe. Intercountry and transracial adoptees don't take this for granted because rarely do our white Australian parents and families acknowledge racism, let alone have any tools to help equip us. We are left alone straddling the divides, trying to make sense of who we are amongst it, wondering where our loyalties lie, and questioning why it has to be so hard to navigate.

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## Examples of Good Practice / Resources

From Dominic:

<https://www.antiracismkit.com.au/#anchor2>

From Sue:

as a government employee we are required to complete certain modules

<https://www.vic.gov.au/dpcs-cultural-diversity-inclusion-strategy>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/dpc-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2019-2021>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/multidepth.aspx>

Vic Inclusion Agency has some good resources

<https://www.viac.com.au/>

Current VAGO Report: [https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/](https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Diversity%20and%20Inclusion/Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Plan%202019-22_V2.pdf)

[Diversity%20and%20Inclusion/](https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Diversity%20and%20Inclusion/Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Plan%202019-22_V2.pdf)

[Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Plan%202019-22\\_V2.pdf](https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Diversity%20and%20Inclusion/Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Plan%202019-22_V2.pdf)

Vic Multicultural Commission

<https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/>

Meseret:

[Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know about the People We Don't Know](#) by

Malcolm Gladwell (book)

Gabbie:

As a NSW Health employee we have mandatory training & education modules that we have to complete in orientation training.

Lynelle:

[UNHEARD](#) (LADbible Australia Amazon Prime) A video series uncovering first hand accounts of Australian racial injustice

The [Multi-Racial Relationships Project](#) designed to dismantle systemic racism and racial inequity (USA based project)

[Racism is an Adverse Childhood Experience](#)

[Microaggressions are a big deal: How to talk them out and when to walk away](#)

The National SEED Project: Peggy McIntosh's White Privilege Papers

How you can be an Ally in the Fight for Racial Justice

Racial Trauma causes Post Traumatic Stress Disorder but Post Traumatic Growth is

Real

Race Resources specific to intercountry/transracial adoption

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## Further Consultations

Key Contact Name	Organisation	Contact Details
<p>Lynelle Long</p> <p>Each of the 19 (+ 5) adoptees who participated wish to continue to provide further consultation to the AHRC for this Anti Racism Framework to ensure intercountry/transracial adoptee perspectives are included</p>	InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV)	<a href="mailto:lynelle@intercountryadopteevoices.com">lynelle@intercountryadopteevoices.com</a>
<p>Attendees: Dominic, Gabbie, Gabby, Jamie, Jonas, Tara, Linzi, Roopali, Ranjini, Rani, Meseret, Shaun, Sue, Jessica, Tim, Sophie, Shan, Ben, Anna</p> <p>Apologies - sick/unwell / last minute disruptions - but wish to be involved: Jerusha, Michelle, Beti, Ebony, James</p>		

Here is our Perspective Paper that provides a more in-depth nuanced glimpse of our Lived Experience of Racism in Intercountry Adoption. We aim to help educate those within the Human Rights Commission and other areas of the Australian government. We felt this might be a useful resource for those developing the anti-racism framework to have something more concrete to work from, in order to have a better understanding of racism. It would be amazing to have a resource like this for government to be educated by the many groups represented in this consultation.