

Rights of passage – two years on

The experiences of Australian-Sudanese young people

Background

Rights of passage – two years on is the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's follow-up report on Australian-Sudanese young people's experiences of racism and discrimination in the City of Greater Dandenong.

The 2008 *Rights of passage* report found that experiences of racism toward young Australian-Sudanese people prevented them from moving freely in the community and limited their access to services, employment and education. Young people were also concerned about the way they were treated by police and portrayed by the media.

The *Rights of passage* report made a number of recommendations to address these issues and protect the rights of Australian-Sudanese young people.

In 2010 the Commission conducted research as part of developing a report to examine progress against the recommendations of *Rights of passage*.

Summary of findings

Rights of passage – two years on is the result of submissions made by five Victorian Government departments, three statutory authorities and the local council, and consultation with community leaders and 45 young people.

The Commission found that governments and community organisations have developed and implemented a range of positive initiatives, which are highlighted in the report.

However, the young people interviewed for the follow-up report told the Commission they continue to experience racism, which limits their access to employment and education, and reported concerns about the way they are treated by police.

For example, many young people said that they felt unfairly targeted by the police:

We were on the train and police came out of nowhere ... They said 'Where's your ticket, where's your ID?' We asked why (did they come up to us) and they said 'There was a fight and it was Sudanese and we're trying to find out who caused it'.



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Young people said that discrimination affects their ability to find a job, for example:

I applied for a job – they talked to me on the phone then when I got there they were like, ‘Are you black?’ I was like, ‘I’m just looking for a job, does it matter if I’m black?’ but they were like ‘We can’t take you.’

Young people also told the Commission that they feel discrimination prevents them from succeeding in education, for example:

A lot of kids, they say ‘Oh I was thinking to do medicine but the teacher told me I can’t do it’. They destroy (their) motivation so they think ‘Oh I’ll just do the easy (course)’.

The Commission’s research emphasises the need for institutions to continue to work to prevent and address race discrimination.

The new *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* which comes into force in August 2011 means that institutions including government, non-government agencies and businesses must take proactive measures to prevent discrimination.

Would you like a copy of the Rights of passage report or more information about the project?

The full report and further information are available at **humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/rop**

This report summary is also available in Dinka, Nuer and Arabic languages.

How can the Commission help people who have experienced racism and discrimination?

The Commission can assist young people to make complaints about race discrimination and vilification. Making a complaint can help young people resolve these issues and get on with their lives. It also sends a strong message that discrimination is against the law and will not be tolerated in Victoria.

Call our Advice Line or visit our website for more information or to make an enquiry online. Interpreter services are available through our Advice Line.

To receive regular email updates from the Commission, subscribe to our eupdate service at humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/maillinglist

Contact the Commission

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