

Factsheet: Cultural safety

How our services are tailored for First Nations peoples

The Commission stands on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. We recognise their deep connection to Country and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Cultural safety is one of the guiding principles of the Commission's service to help people resolve complaints. The service is [tailored](#) for First Nations peoples to be culturally safe and welcoming.

The Commission uses conciliation to help [resolve complaints](#) of [discrimination](#), [sexual harassment](#), [racial or religious vilification](#) and [victimisation](#).

Conciliation is an informal, flexible approach to finding an outcome to a complaint. It allows both parties to tell their stories, be listened to and work together to find an outcome that works for everyone.

How do we make our service culturally safe?

We show our ongoing [commitment to cultural safety](#) by:

- ensuring you can talk directly with a First Nations staff member where possible
- prioritising your complaint
- ensuring complaints staff have had cultural safety training
- connecting you with other organisations (such as legal, advocacy or community services) who may be able to support you or help with issues that we are unable to assist with
- seeking feedback about your experiences with us and whether you felt culturally safe.

Can I talk to a First Nations staff member?

When you contact the Commission, we will ask you if you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is to ensure our services are culturally safe and welcoming for you.

You always have the choice to speak to a First Nations staff member, if they are available. This includes if you are thinking about making a complaint or once you have made a complaint.

What is the role of the conciliator?

A conciliator at the Commission will be responsible for your matter and will keep you up to date.

The conciliator will not take sides and will make sure conciliation is safe and supportive for everyone. They will also do their best to address any power imbalances on the way, including in meetings.

Can someone support me during conciliation?

We know it can be hard to tell your story, so it's important you feel safe and supported during conciliation. You are welcome to bring someone along to support you, such as a trusted friend, family member, Elder or community member. That person can also speak to us on your behalf if you would like.

Do I have to meet face-to-face with the other party?

Our service is flexible and you have the choice about whether you want to meet the other party in person, by phone or video. You might prefer your conciliator to share information with the other party, so you don't have to meet them directly. You can choose what works best for you.

How much of my time will it take?

We recognise that First Nations peoples often carry a cultural load, being more likely to have caring responsibilities and cultural and community obligations than other people.

For this reason, we try to make our service as flexible as possible. For example:

- where possible, we can contact you at a time that works for you
- you can choose whether you meet in person, by phone or video
- we can provide information in any way you would like – such as a short email or phone call.

Most complaints are resolved within six months but we will give you the time you need to participate.

You can choose not to continue with your complaint at any point. If you are not able to continue, we will talk with you about your options and any assistance that is available.

You will always be able to return to conciliation if and when you are ready.

This factsheet is intended as a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for legal advice.

What are the possible outcomes?

Your conciliator will help the parties reach an outcome that works for everyone. For example, this could be an apology, changes to an organisation's policies or practices or financial compensation.

Outcomes can support your own needs or may address systemic issues that will benefit your community (such as providing cultural safety training to all staff).

Where can I find more information?

You can find out more about how we tailor our services for First Nations peoples by visiting: humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/tailored-services/

You can also contact us on 1300 292 153 or enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au if you would like to have a chat about conciliation. Remember, you can ask to talk to a First Nations staff member if you prefer.

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