

Strategies to address anxiety about race relations

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The results of 12 years of research by the 'Challenging Racism Project' were released today, providing a national picture of racism, ethnic relations and cultural diversity in Australia.

Surveying more than 12,500 people from all States and Territories across Australia, the national results of the Challenging Racism Project revealed that:

- * 86.8 percent of respondents across Australia agree that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different cultures;
- * 84.4 percent believe all races are equal; and
- * 78.1 percent feel secure with people of different ethnic origins.

The Project also found that 12.3 percent of respondents admit to being prejudiced against other cultures; and 11.2 percent believe that it is not a good idea for people of different races to marry one another.

Lead researcher, Professor Kevin Dunn from the University of Western Sydney's School of Social Sciences, says the findings indicate that the majority of Australians are positive about living in a multicultural country and that community relations in Australia are generally good.

"However, there are clearly a significant number of Australians that still have a level of anxiety or discomfort about cultural difference, which makes the case for a nation-wide commitment to challenging racism that much stronger," says Professor Dunn.

The Challenging Racism data also revealed that the frequency of racism varies substantially from place to place.

"Each region of the country has its own strengths and challenges, as well as its own capacity to address those challenges. In fact, the differences between regions are to such a degree that to compare them would be like comparing apples to oranges," says Professor Dunn.

Rather than attempting to make direct comparisons between suburbs or places, the research team focused on the more constructive goal of addressing the nature of racism and developing anti-racism strategies that can be implemented at the local level.

"Governments, community groups and individuals can visit the Challenging [Racism](#) website to look up the regional profile of their area and find out which anti-racism strategies are most appropriate to them," says Professor Dunn.

Provided by University of Western Sydney

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