



# **CALL IT OUT RACISM REGISTER THE FIRST SIX MONTHS**

FIONA ALLISON AND CHRIS CUNNEEN  
WITH ASSISTANCE FROM AYŞE SELÇUK

JUMBUNNA INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS  
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

## Acknowledgement

The authors of this report acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the ongoing connections that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land, sea and community.

The Jumbunna Research Institute (UTS) and the National Justice Project acknowledge those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have reported incidents of racism to *Call It Out*, and those who have reported on behalf of or as witnesses of racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This Report would not have been possible without their courage, and we are honoured to hear and hold the experiences shared with us through the Register.

The stories shared on the Register confirm it can be difficult to call racism out, given the emotional and other impacts of racism and of speaking out about it. While we have not been able to include all these stories in this report, all persons who have reported incidents on the Register are contributing to the telling of a larger story about racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country. All reports made to the Register have been listened to and heard, whether or not they are explicitly referenced in the report.

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**CONTENT WARNING:** This report contains content that is confronting and distressing. Please take care when reading.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About the *Call It Out* Register

The Jumbunna Institute for Education and Research (Jumbunna Research), in collaboration with the National Justice Project (NJP), developed *Call It Out*, as an online register (the Register) to record all forms and levels of racism and discrimination experienced by First Nations Peoples.<sup>1</sup> *Call It Out* was officially launched on 21 March 2022 to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

*Call It Out* provides a simple and secure online reporting mechanism without the usual barriers which often inhibit reports of racism. It is intended to provide First Nations Peoples who have experienced racial discrimination, including systemic racism, or witnesses to such racism with the opportunity to share their experiences.

The Register provides an independent, Indigenous-controlled platform which is distinct from traditional complaints and legal processes. Reports of incidents to police or complaints bodies are often restricted to more overt acts of racism, and responses provided by antidiscrimination and other laws and complaints mechanisms can be ineffective. In contrast, *Call It Out* is an ongoing, respondent generated initiative with a national focus. The Register provides the opportunity to identify patterns of racism at institutional and systemic levels and inform evidence-based advocacy and campaigning initiatives that proactively strive towards eliminating racism and discrimination towards First Nations Peoples in this country.

## 1.2 Aim of the Register

The aim of *Call It Out* is to generate evidence to assist First Nations leaders, organisations and advocates in garnering support and resources to develop tools and strategies to address racism and discrimination, including recommendations for structural and cultural change.

Racism and discrimination take many forms: including direct and indirect, interpersonal, online and institutional. Unlike other mechanisms that are limited by distinct parameters, *Call It Out* is designed to be unencumbered by predetermined restrictions, to allow respondents the freedom to share any experiences they consider relevant to shape a comprehensive representation of First Nations Peoples' lived experiences of racism and discrimination.

By using the Register to call out racism, First Nations Peoples and allies help to tell the true story of racism in this country. Collecting, analysing and reporting on First Nations People's experiences of racism enable us and community leaders to continue the fight against racism and protect future generations.

Reports made to *Call It Out* will enable Jumbunna Research to:

- Develop comprehensive reports on racism and discrimination experienced by First Nations Peoples

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<sup>1</sup> We have used the terms Aboriginal, First Nations and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people interchangeably. The term Indigenous is used where it is in the narrative recorded on the database. We only use the term Indigenous when describing a 'non-Indigenous' person. We recognise that this approach does not reflect the diversity of and that there is not consensus amongst First Nations Peoples in Australia about how to be described. We apologise if this approach causes offence or misrepresentation. This is not our intention.

- Assist First Nations organisations and leaders to identify problem areas and to respond to racism and discrimination
- Explore measures to counter racism and discrimination against First Nations Peoples
- Educate the community about racism and discrimination against First Nations Peoples
- Support appropriate investment in Indigenous-led anti-racism activities and initiatives
- Analyse the actions and demographics of perpetrators to better understand how to counter the behaviours of individuals and characteristics of systems that require reform
- Measure patterns in the circumstances, nature, frequency and geographic spread of discrimination and racism.

## 1.3 About this Report

This report provides a preliminary analysis of the incidents of racism recorded during the first six months of the *Call It Out* Register, covering the period 21 March 2022 to 20 September 2022. The analysis set out in this report focuses on select issues or areas. In 2023 Jumbunna Research will publish a report containing more comprehensive analysis of the Register's data gathered over a twelve month period. There will be an annual *Call It Out* report released each year thereafter, which will also enable us to analyse the changing nature and extent of racism over time.

The Register contains 16 questions covering the nature of the incident, details of where, when and who was involved and possible responses. The questions involve multiple choice and free text answers.

To be recorded as an incident there is a minimum threshold of recorded answers which must be met. Confidential information on the person completing the report which includes their name and email/phone number, as well agreement for the use of anonymised information must be completed, and in addition three questions on the nature of the incident must be answered for a response to be counted as a registration of an incident on the Register.

Over the six month period to 20 September 2022 there were 300 registrations of incidents on the data base which fulfilled these criteria. From the 300 registrations we removed 31 reports which were made by individuals who used the platform to promote racism. We removed one further registration which was a valid report of racism but involved a person who was not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The total of validated reports used for the following analysis is 267. It should be noted that this a count of *registrations* rather than *incidents* as a single registration could cover ongoing or multiple events and/or institutional or systemic racism. We note that in this report we have used the term 'racism' to describe all forms of racism, discrimination based on race and racial vilification.<sup>2</sup>

The quotations used in this report are drawn from the narratives included in the Register. Throughout this report the quotations which are identified as 'Self-report, Aboriginal male' and 'Self-report, Aboriginal female' are drawn from reports entered into the Register by First Nations people who directly experienced racism.<sup>3</sup> Those reporting incidents could also identify gender 'in another way'. These reports are identified in the report as 'Self-report, non-binary'. The quotations recorded in the Register by witnesses of racism or by someone reporting racism

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<sup>2</sup> We also note that although our focus in this report is on race-based issues, we acknowledge that individuals may experience these issues alongside other forms of discrimination (based on disability, age etc.).

<sup>3</sup> One self-report by an Aboriginal person does not record gender. This is referred to as 'Self-report, gender unknown'.

on behalf of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons/peoples are identified as ‘Witness report’ and ‘Report by friend or relative’. These reports are not identified by Aboriginality or gender. *Call It Out* records the gender of the person experiencing racism, not of the person reporting it. Nor does it record the Aboriginality of reports made by third parties (witnesses, family members or friends). We have also removed from all data any identifying details about perpetrators or victims to maintain privacy.

## 2. The Data

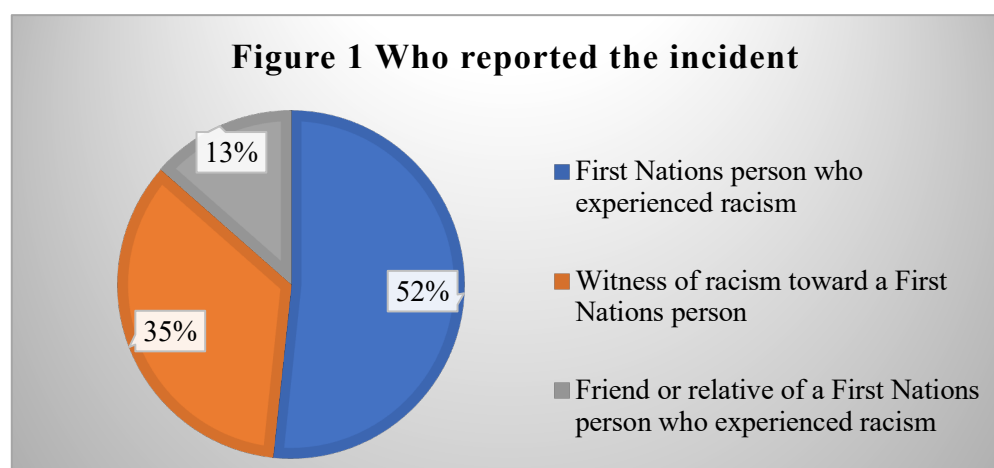
### 2.1 Who reported the incident

As Table 1 and Figure 1 below indicates, slightly more than half of the registrations of incidents were reported by the First Nations person who experienced the racism. Slightly more than a third were reported by a witness and the remainder by friend or relative the person who experienced the racism. This was a compulsory question for a registration to be accepted.

**Table 1 Who reported the incident**

	N	%
First Nations person who experienced racism	138	52
Witness of racism toward a First Nations person	93	35
Friend or relative of a First Nations person who experienced racism	36	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=267.



### 2.2 Where the incident was experienced or witnessed

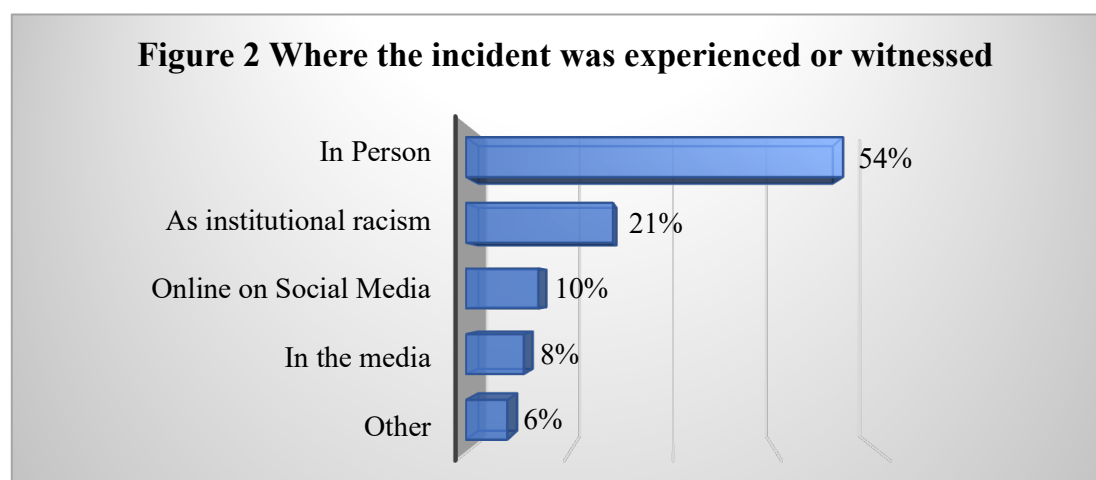
Individuals completing the Register were asked where the incident was experienced or witnessed. This was a compulsory question for a registration to be accepted. Individuals could choose more than one answer to reflect, for example, that institutional racism might be experienced in various ways, or that racism in the traditional media might also be replicated on social media.

**Table 2 Where the incident was experienced or witnessed**

	N	%
In person	182	54
As institutional racism	71	21
Online on social media	35	10
In the media	28	8
Other	20	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=267; Responses N=336.

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, the majority of incidents were witnessed or experienced in person (54%). However, one in five (21%) witnessed or experienced examples of institutional racism and a further 18% witnessed or experienced racism either in traditional media or social media.



## 2.3 The type of racism

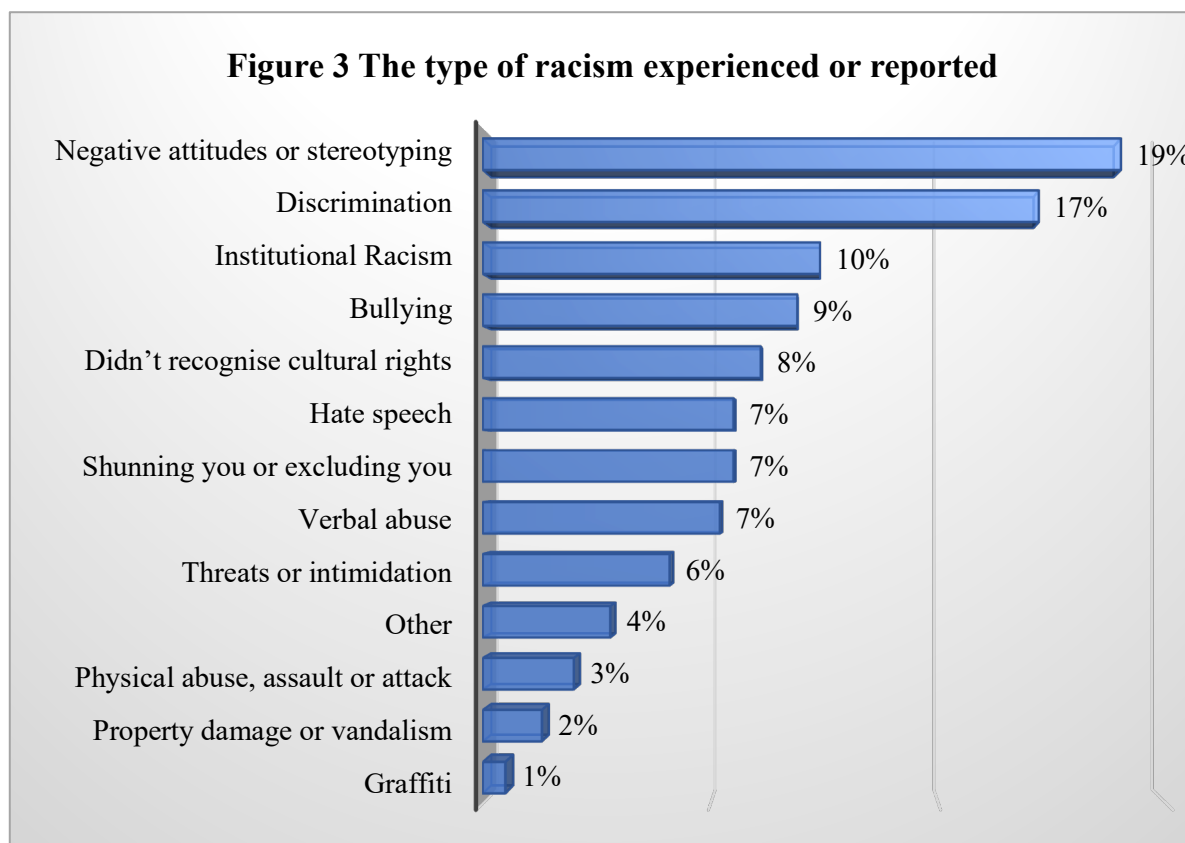
Individuals were asked to classify the type of racism reported from a choice of 13 options. This was a compulsory question for a registration to be accepted. Those completing the registry could choose more than one option and many people did so (155 people provided multiple responses).

**Table 3 The type of racism experienced or reported**

	N	%
Negative attitudes or stereotyping	140	19
Discrimination	122	17
Institutional Racism	74	10
Bullying	69	9
Didn't recognise cultural rights	61	8
Hate speech	55	7
Shunning you or excluding you	55	7
Verbal abuse	52	7
Threats or intimidation	41	6
Other	28	4
Physical abuse, assault or attack	20	3
Property damage or vandalism	13	2
Graffiti	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=267; Responses N=735.



**Figure 3 The type of racism experienced or reported**

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 3, there were a total of 735 classifications made with the most common being negative attitudes or stereotyping (19%) and discrimination (17%).

### Racist stereotyping and discrimination

Racist stereotyping was the predominant type of racism identified in the reports, largely because it underpins the occurrence of racism and discrimination in multiple contexts. The following three extracts relate to the media, in public and in private social situations, as examples.

On a regular basis, if I am at friends' houses or other small gatherings, upon finding out that I am Aboriginal I am presented with two main themes: 1) You don't look Aboriginal (due to white skin), and 2) Well you're not one of \*those\* Aboriginals (referencing the stereotype of a lazy black person in the gutter drunk). (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Nameless journalist published a story about 'alleged' sexually explicit content online involving an entirely different non-Indigenous individual, but on the very day Garma Festival is opened [named media company] used the image of a [named Indigenous man] in a way that associates him [with the story] on the front page click bait headline (no mistake and typical ...). (Witness report).

I was walking in a street and an older white man wanted to know about the black deaths in custody T-shirt I was wearing. I started explaining and he seemed OK but then he said white people die in jail too. I was explaining about disparities, and he started saying all this stuff about negative stereotypes and [A]boriginal people - how he thought they were violent, etcetera. Then he kept repeating the word 'boong' after I explained it was racist and why. He just kept saying it like a naughty child. No matter what I said he wouldn't shut up and he said it at me like I was rubbish. (Self-report, Aboriginal, non-binary).

Discussion in later sections of this report describes stereotyping in other spaces, including in the workplace, policing and health services.

## **Institutional racism**

Reports of institutional racism constituted 10% of all incidents. The incidents reported often described the denial both of cultural difference of Aboriginal people and of their past and ongoing experiences of racism.

I am retired but was an Anglican priest for 30 years ... I organised a NAIDOC reconciliation service in my church with an apology to Indigenous peoples. The [church] elders said that they wanted the apology excluded. I said no. I was shouted at. I experienced ongoing racism from that day on, and at the end of the year my contract was not renewed. I know why. I retired in disgust and now paint to preserve culture. (Self-report, Aboriginal male).

My current work is with young people, and I have witnessed first-hand school staff ignoring the fact that Aboriginal students are different and have different learning styles - despite being told [this] by experts. I have also heard many statements [like] 'All children are the same and [should] be treated the same.' I believe this is also a form of institutional racism because they are ignoring past histories and how generational trauma affects the people today. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

The incidents reported often involved government departments and agencies (see also Table 4). One report by an Aboriginal female of non-recognition of cultural rights might also be categorised as institutional racism. The incident involved an admission made during a work meeting by a senior staff member from a government child protection agency that the agency's child protection assessment framework led to 'racist decision making' by staff – meaning that Aboriginal people were being treated less favourably than non-Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal woman making the report noted that there was little recognition of cultural rights in the framework or decision-making, with significant negative consequences.

[Through this framework] more of our children are being taken away from family on the back of their racist decision making. Those children are our nieces, nephews, sons daughters and cousins. These decisions are breaking down our cultural fabric. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Other government institutions identified in the *Call It Out* reports included, for example, health (see section further below), education and justice.

My daughter's English teacher was giving written feedback on her story. She told my daughter not to use the term 'non-Aboriginal' [and to use] 'normal, white' [instead]. She encouraged my daughter to describe the Aboriginal characters in her story as 'caramel coloured half castes' ... On Sorry Day they [also] got all of the kids, including the Aboriginal ones, to apologise for Stolen Generation. (Report of friend or relative).

Police officers pulled my then boyfriend over in his car, demanded his licence, demand he tell them the rego plate of his car (What the f\*\*\*!??). Gave NO reason for being pulled over and questioned. Went over car looking for defects. Boyfriend told me an hour before we got to that town that this is what happens every time he drives through [it] (to see his parents in next town over). (Report of friend or relative).

## Aggressive racism

Aggressively racist behaviour was also evident. Taken together physical and verbal abuse, hate speech, bullying, threats, intimidation and damage to property comprised 34% of responses.

As one example of aggressive racism, an Aboriginal male employee of a government agency reported an incident occurring at an online work meeting from which he was excluded. This employee stated that a senior work colleague had said at this meeting that he should be hanged for making a complaint. The complaint was against the senior staff member for allegedly being involved in ‘harassment, stalking, assaults and money/equipment theft’. The employee wrote on Register, ‘I’ve struggled to deal with the thought of being hung and having them all pointing at me laughing’.

Another report described the unnecessary use of physical restraints on an Aboriginal patient:

Multiple nurses insisting on physical restraints for a patient who had removed medical device multiple times. When I spoke to the patient it was clear that his physical condition meant the device was accidentally removed and he agreed to a gentle approach to avoid it accidentally being removed again. Nurses still insisted on physically restraining him, as per the doctor’s notes (though [the] doctor had not spoken to [the] patient). Head nurse also insisted that his disability must not be too severe if I could have a conversation with him. He had a physical disability, not a cognitive impairment. (Witness report).

Other examples of verbal and physical abuse and of bullying and harassment in public include the following.

My daughter was at home having a smoke out the front of her residence with a friend. The neighbour approached her with a screwdriver and said ‘Why don’t you shut up you black c\*nt’ then punched her in the mouth. My daughter had 3 teeth dislodged with one completely removed from her mouth. The police had to find the tooth and as there was no emergency dentist available at the time, she has had to have many painful trips to the dentist and it’s likely she will need false teeth. (Report of friend or relative).

I reside near a pub. Patrons ... walked past my house leaving the pub, hurled derogatory racist words to me and my children whilst we were enjoying the warm summer night. I defended my kids and removed them out of harm’s way. The people smashed my car window and police were called ... My kids and grandkids were traumatised by this unfortunate event. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Workplace bullying and harassment was also frequently reported (see below).

## 2.4 Where and When the Incident Occurred

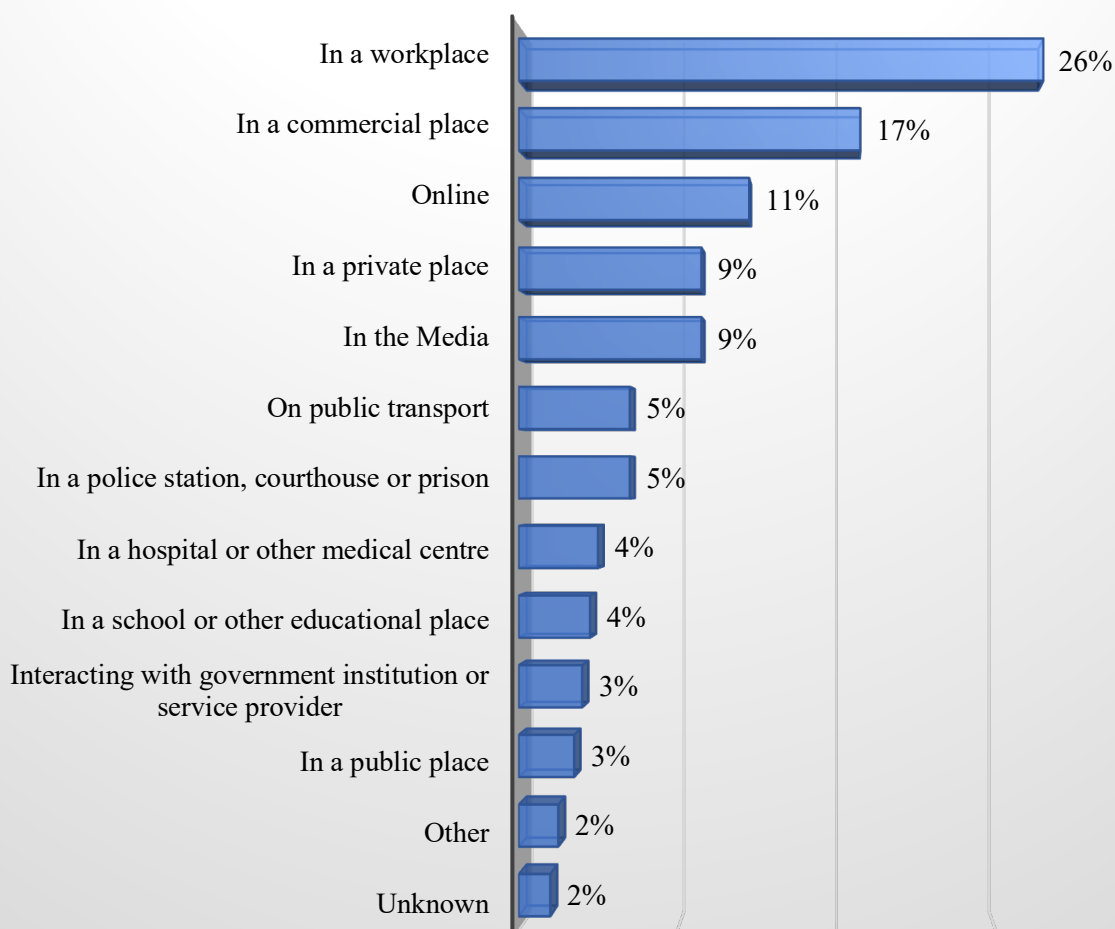
Individuals were asked to indicate where the incident occurred from a choice of 13 items. This was a voluntary question and of the 267 valid registrations, more than two thirds of people (184) answered the question and of these 36 people indicated multiple places.

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 4 one in four (26%) incidents occurred in a workplace and nearly one in five (17%) in a commercial place. Racism online and in the media together accounted for another 20%. Government or private institutions (justice, education, health and other) together accounted for 16% of incidents (see discussion above).

**Table 4 Where the incident occurred**

	N	%
In a workplace	66	26
In a commercial place	43	17
Online	29	11
In a private place	23	9
In the Media	23	9
On public transport	14	5
In a police station, courthouse or prison	14	5
In a hospital or other medical centre	10	4
In a school or other educational place	9	4
Interacting with government institution or service provider	8	3
In a public place	7	3
Other	5	2
Unknown	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=184; Responses N=255.

**Figure 4 Where the incident occurred**

## Racism in the workplace

Reports of workplace related incidents described bullying and harassment. Stereotyping was commonly raised in this context, as follows.

Been asked at work what percentage of Aboriginal I am, why don't I practice Culture, speak Language, throw Boomerangs and play Didgeridoos. (Self-report, Aboriginal male).

The last black fulla to work there left. According to my supervisor he used to go 'walkabout'. I was constantly asked if I 'would go walkabout.' (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

[When I was a] 16/17 year old [working in a bakery] ... I was always told [by work colleagues that] I was only claiming I was Aboriginal cause I get benefits (I'm not on any type of benefits from Centrelink or anyone else 😞). Then when they believed that I was Aboriginal it just got worse. I have ADHD and [a white work colleague said that] most Indigenous people he's met have mental issues. So, his theory is that we haven't evolved with the rest of humans. He said we shouldn't be considered humans. I would continuously get called a petrol sniffer. All the white people would call me a filthy nigga. (Self-report, Aboriginal male).

Aboriginal people also identified that their capabilities were questioned at work, with non-Aboriginal colleagues believing that Aboriginal employees had not been employed or promoted based on merit. Rather, they had played or wanted to play the 'black card'. This was confirmed in witness reports.

Two colleagues of mine who will this week be interviewing for a competitive promotion were talking about a third colleague also selected for the interview. He is Indigenous and these other two colleagues were complaining to each other that our organisation is constantly doing 'diversity hires' and that this young man has 'the black card to play that [our organisation] has a hardon [sic] for'. This isn't the first time I have heard these two and other colleagues complain about diversity-motivated hiring in our workplace. They have also made similar remarks in the past about 'most of us have to work for what we have, except if you're black' and one has repeatedly made mocking dancing/chanting impressions of Indigenous people in the workplace in a joking manner. (Witness report).

Other workplace issues included being paid less than non-Aboriginal staff and workplaces paying lip-service to cultural inclusion and safety.

Racist comments are made by staff at all levels. They have ... a [course designed to] promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety and it states on the document this [course] must have consultation with community/Elders and best practice is to have Aboriginal staff deliver. But they ignore this and do their own rules and select their non-First Nations staff to deliver the unit with no experience in culture at all. Their RAP [Reconciliation Action Plan] is tokenistic at best, despite First Nations staff trying to voice their concerns. We are all ignored. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Reports related to the workplace captured the ongoing nature of racist incidents (see also Table 6) - their multiple layers and the interconnection of issues and events. This was also evident in reports made in other areas.

I have worked for the Department of Education for 17 years and have put up with ongoing bullying, intimidation, racism and ostracisation, not only by my principals but

by work colleagues and more senior people in the Department. I have been locked in a classroom by parents and verbally abused and sworn at. They wanted to see my teaching qualifications. I've had parents and two staff members in my schools say they don't want me to teach their children. I have been told that Aboriginal teachers are not good teachers. I have been called names by staff members. I have been ostracised by my colleagues because they all talk amongst themselves and did not include me in their circles. I have been followed around while on playground duty by the principal, watching me. I have many more things that have happened to me in the Education Department, too many to put down. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

## **Racism in commercial places**

Reports of discrimination in commercial settings described Aboriginal people being overlooked for private tenancies and for service. As examples, there were reports of being served last at cafes and similar or not being served at all. Reports also described Aboriginal people not being able to board buses or being treated differently as bus passengers.

The [named] community is being discriminated against by local real estates for being Aboriginal. They've lost everything in the recent NSW floods. Have nowhere to live. The CEO of the local Land Council had keys to several properties and the second the real estate agent learnt the properties were for Aboriginal families they literally took the keys back. Then stated the properties were off the market. (Report by friend or relative).

A bus driver didn't stop ... when a young Indigenous boy was running toward the bus stop with his hand signal (he wasn't even 10 meters way from the bus stop and everyone on the bus could see him running toward the stop). I just found it sad because if it was anyone else, they most likely would have stopped. Also, I catch public transport a lot, especially the buses, and not all but some drivers change their attitudes/tones of voice when speaking with Aboriginal people (more rude or not as nice as they are to others which I think is wrong). (Self-report, Aboriginal man).

Me (Anglo) and friend (Central Australian Arrernte female) both standing in queue together waiting to get to register. Employee came up to her, poked her twice in the arm and yelled 'you can't buy that wine'. Kept yelling same words. I told the fella the goods were mine ...he went away. We are 55yr old women, he was 20s. Both of us were entitled to buy wine. My friend was calm, told him to go away and don't touch her. He poked again. She ignored him. I was ashamed, angry shocked at the white privilege so in my face. My friend told me confrontations happens all the time. (Witness report).

There were also a number of reports about being singled out for security checks in stores or airports.

My friend and I were in [named service station] looking at what snacks to buy. Once we had got what we wanted we proceeded towards the counter to pay. On arrival the service station lady has said to me 'Can you empty your pockets and lift up your shirt, I've seen the footage on CCTV and I'll show my manager.' I took out my pockets and showed her that I haven't stolen a thing, but she insists that I show her my pockets and raise my shirt. She proceeds to tell my friend who wasn't asked to empty her pockets or lift her shirt (my friend is a Caucasian girl) her reasoning behind questioning me, that [stealing] has happened a lot in her store (Self-report, Aboriginal female).



## Racism in health

Reports about racism in health services came from those directly impacted. A parent reported the death of their son soon after presenting to the Emergency Department of a regional hospital in NSW with a ‘popping or tearing sound/feeling in his stomach’. The parent identified that their son was ‘prematurely misdiagnosed, wrongly sedated/medicated, denied medical imaging (that would have saved his life)’ and ultimately discharged to ‘Correctional Services according to the discharge letter’. Corrections was recorded as the son’s previous address and had not been updated by staff during more recent visits to the hospital. The parent identified that their son was discriminated against due to ‘Aboriginality, admission to casual marijuana use and staff believing he was an inmate’. He passed away less than 24hrs after discharge from two perforated ulcers. Another parent reported their son and his partner being told to leave another regional NSW hospital ‘without any support in place although my son’s partner had her 2nd trimester pregnancy end in the death of her baby. My son had to birth his deceased son on a motel floor.’ The parent reported that this couple now suffer long-term mental health problems and that they are ‘now trying to keep them alive.’

Those working in health also reported racism, describing racist stereotyping by their work colleagues with implications for health service delivery to Aboriginal people.

I was the doctor looking after a very unwell young Aboriginal female in hospital. She had hearing impairment and delirium and needed her family with her to support her. The nurse looking after her stated to the other nursing staff during handover that if visitors arrived, they should get security to throw them out of the ward since ‘you know what these people are like’. She was implying that Aboriginal relatives on the ward would create havoc and were unwanted. The nurse described the patient as being demanding and uncooperative when in fact her illness was causing confusion and agitation and she needed a calm, caring environment. Instead, she received discrimination and abuse. (Witness report).

I was talking to a colleague of mine at the hospital where we work as nurses ... This colleague stated to me that when Aboriginal people come into the Emergency Department, she is immediately looking for signs of alcohol and drug abuse (i.e., track marks). She also specifically said she would be assessing their level of hygiene and cleanliness in order to determine whether she would be ‘safe’ around this patient. However, she confirmed that she does not perform these same ‘checks’ for non-Indigenous patients and she was sure to state ‘oh but this isn't racism. I am just keeping myself safe based on past experience.’ (Witness report).

Reports were also made about stereotyping during medical student training and education. Two examples follow.

The medical school continues to teach a deficit discourse of Aboriginal people accessing the health care system. The university was confronted several times about their racist discourse in teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In one case (there were several) it described an Aboriginal mother as being neglectful of her two year old child in hospital. It describes the family living in a ‘galvanised iron structure’ in the back yard of a relative in a town camp in Alice Springs, even though the case starts off by saying the family lives 300km from Alice Springs. All the stereotypes are perpetrated. Poor, living in a domestic violence situation, neglectful of her kids, etcetera. The year group petitioned the Director of Medicine to withdraw the case. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

A doctor was teaching a group of medical students on the ward. They stopped at an Aboriginal patient's bedside. This patient had a history of Type 2 diabetes. The doctor explained to his students that 'All Aboriginal people have diabetes because they love to drink orange juice while they sit around and paint'. (Witness report).

## Geographic location of incidents

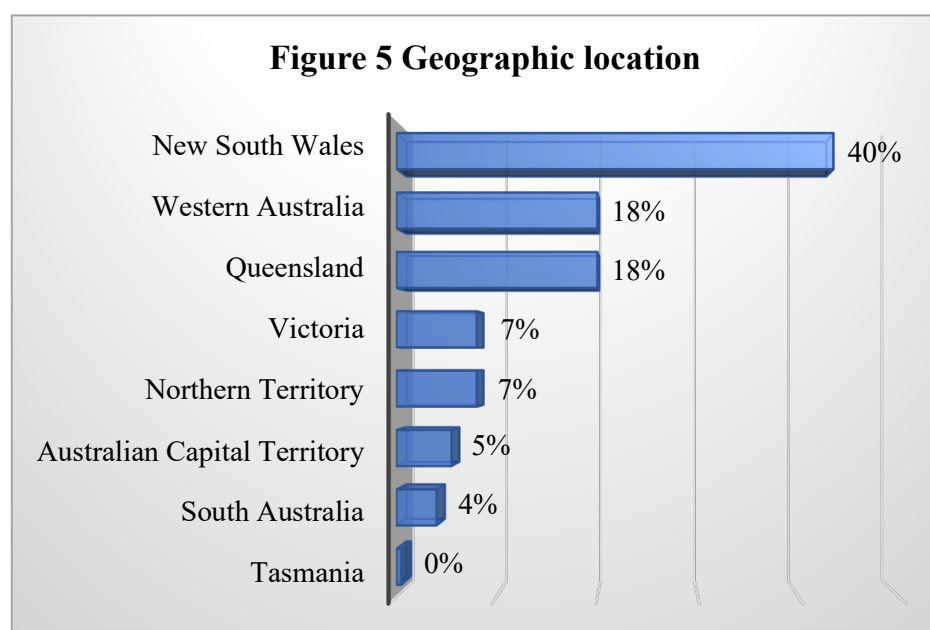
Individuals completing the Register were also asked to indicate in which Australian state or territory the incident occurred or was observed. 219 respondents completed this question.

**Table 5 Geographic location**

	N	%
New South Wales	87	40
Western Australia	40	18
Queensland	40	18
Victoria	16	7
Northern Territory	16	7
Australian Capital Territory	11	5
South Australia	8	4
Tasmania	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

Responses N=219.

Some 40% of incidents were recorded in NSW. This may partially reflect that the *Call It Out* Register was launched in Sydney and has had greater recognition over the first six months in this State.



## When the incident occurred

Those completing the Register were also asked to indicate when the incident occurred or whether it was ongoing. This was a voluntary question and was answered by 210 people, and 21 people chose multiple responses.

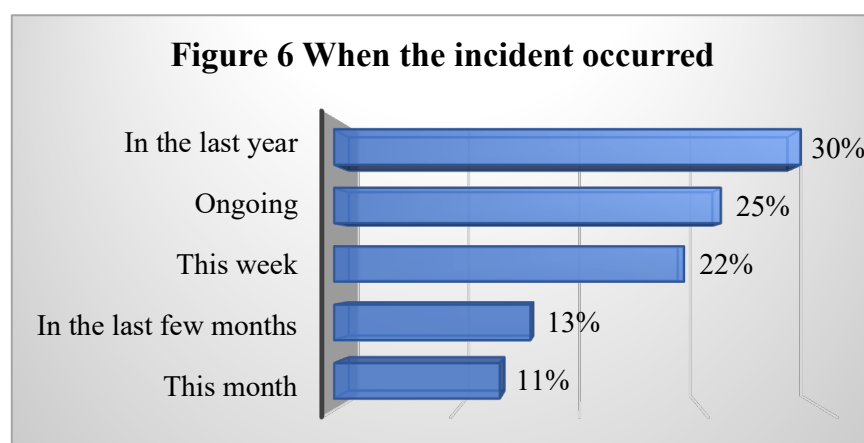


**Table 6 When the incident occurred**

	N	%
In the last year	76	30
Ongoing	63	25
This week	57	22
In the last few months	32	13
This month	27	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=210; Responses N=255.

Table 6 and Figure 6 shows that one in four (25%) incidents were ongoing.



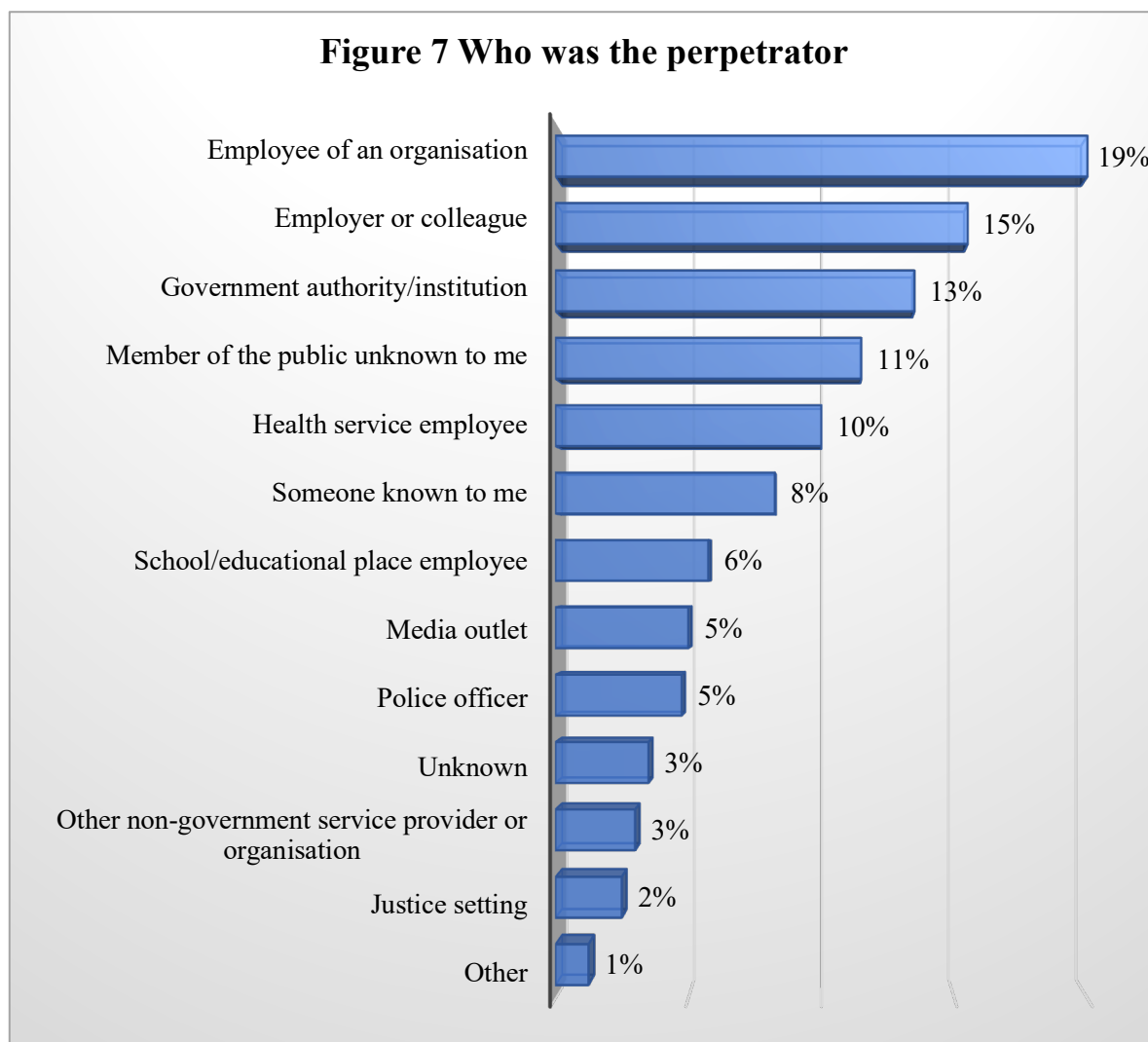
## 2.5 The perpetrator of racism and their gender

Those completing the Register were asked to nominate who the perpetrator of the racism was from 13 different options. This was an optional question which was completed by 234 respondents. Multiple responses were made by 93 individuals.

**Table 7 Who was the perpetrator**

	N	%
Employee of an organisation	80	19
Employer or colleague	62	15
Government authority/institution	54	13
Member of the public unknown to me	46	11
Health service employee	40	10
Someone known to me	33	8
School/educational place employee	23	6
Media outlet	20	5
Police officer	19	5
Unknown	14	3
Other non-government service provider or organisation	12	3
Justice setting	10	2
Other	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=234; Responses N=418.

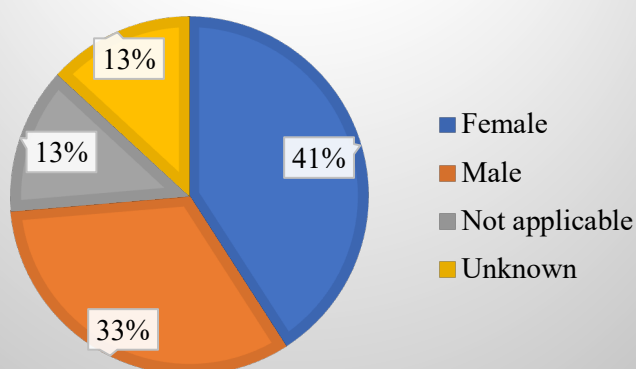
**Figure 7 Who was the perpetrator**

Those completing the Register were asked to identify the gender of the perpetrator, with 263 people completing this optional question. Table 8 and Figure 8 show that of those completing the question, 74% identified the gender of the perpetrator and in the majority of those cases, the perpetrator was identified as female (41%). In 13% of cases the gender was not applicable (potentially relating to an institutional perpetrator) and in 13% of cases it was unknown. Some 39 people identified more than one gender – indicating that more than one person was the perpetrator.

**Table 8 Gender of the perpetrator**

	N	%
Female	115	41
Male	92	33
Not applicable	37	13
Unknown	37	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=263; Responses N=281.

**Figure 8 Gender of the perpetrator**

## 2.6 The Victim of the Incident

More than two thirds (187) of people filling in the Register answered the question on the age of the victim. Of those 187, some 22 (14%) indicated that the age was either unknown or not applicable. Thus, 165 individuals identified an age group for the victim.

**Table 9 Age of the victim**

	N	%
0-9	3	2
10-19	17	10
20-29	31	19
30-39	29	18
40-49	35	21
50+	50	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=165.

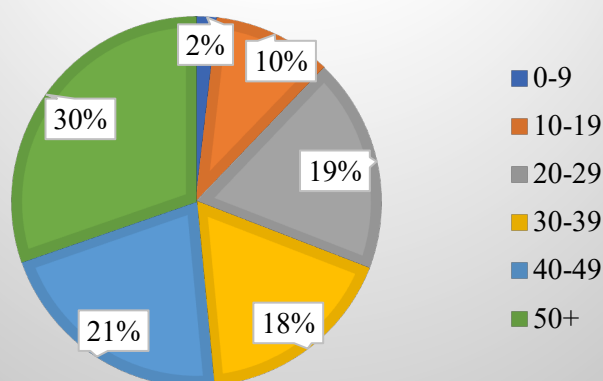
**Figure 9 Age of the victim**

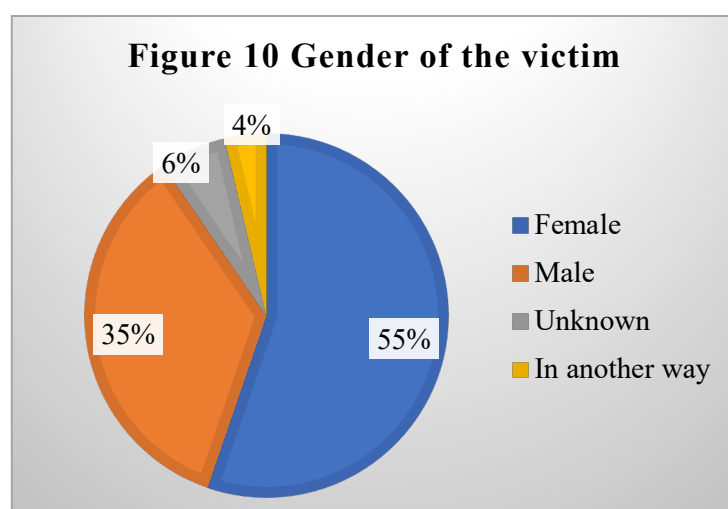
Table 9 and Figure 9 shows that 30% of victims were in the older age category of 50 years or older. Those under the age of 30 years also made-up 31% of victims.

Those completing the survey were asked whether the victim identified as male, female, in another way, or if the gender of the victim was unknown. Table 10 and Figure 9 was completed by 219 respondents. Over half the victims were identified as female (55%).

**Table 10 Gender of the victim**

	N	%
Female	121	55
Male	77	35
Unknown	13	6
In another way	8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=219.



## 2.7 Responding to Racism

The Register set out to record the emotional responses to incidents of racism, how the person responded or took action in response to the incident, and their suggestions for broader political and policy responses to these incidents.

Those completing the Register were asked to nominate their emotional response from a range of 12 items. More than one response could be nominated. Only 61 (23%) of the 267 people completing the Register chose to answer this question. The majority of these people (53) made multiple responses (279).

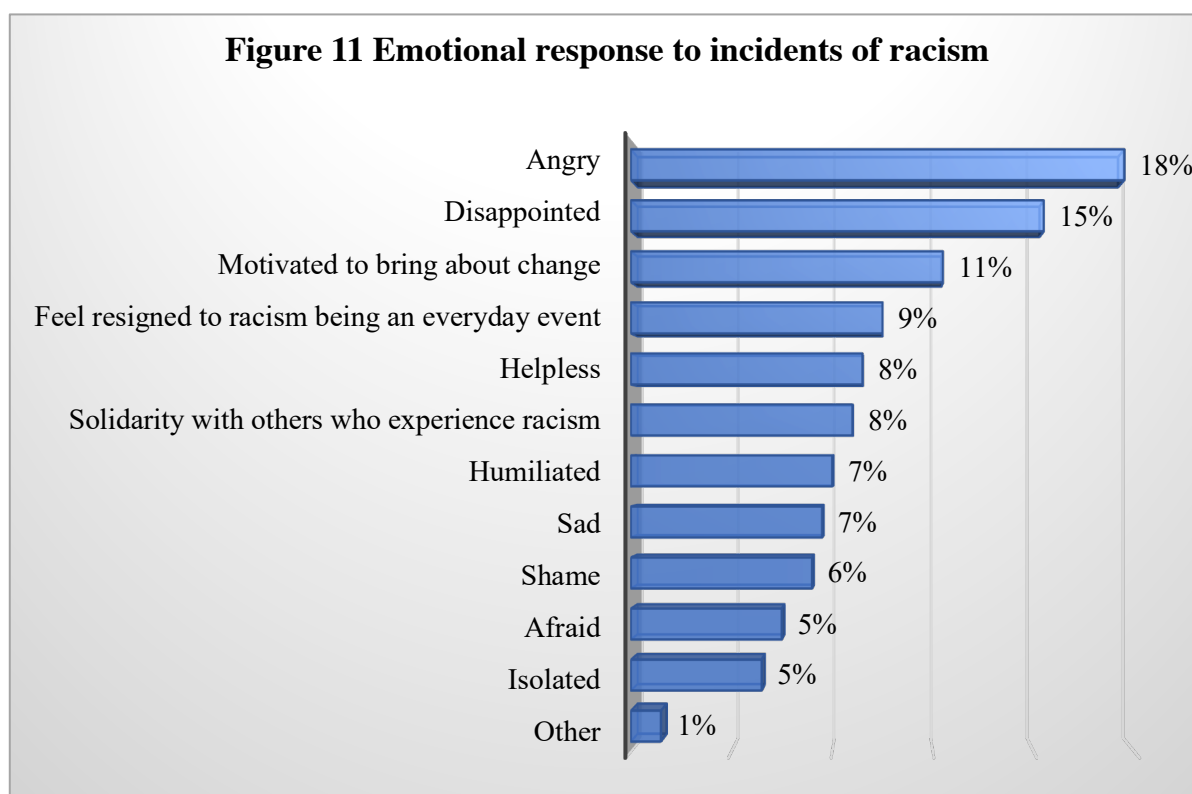
**Table 11 Emotional response to incidents of racism**

	N	%
Angry	49	18
Disappointed	41	15
Motivated to bring about change	31	11
Feel resigned to racism being an everyday event	25	9
Helpless	23	8
Solidarity with others who experience racism	22	8
Humiliated	20	7
Sad	19	7

Shame	18	6
Afraid	15	5
Isolated	13	5
Other	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=61; Responses N=279.

As shown in Table 11 and Figure 11, the most common emotional response was anger (18%), followed by disappointment (15%) and motivation to bring about change (11%).



Emotional responses to racism were described as having significant mental and other health implications for Aboriginal people. One Aboriginal female described these as follows. 'Anxiety, Depression, Multiple Suicide Attempts, Mental health Hospitalisation, Panic attacks!!'. An Aboriginal male described workplace bullying and harassment as causing him 'major anxiety and gastrointestinal issues from the stress. I am only now starting to recover from the gastrointestinal issues as the perpetrator has left the agency'. Comments identified the long-term nature of health impacts, with PTSD symptoms identified in a number of reports. Examples include the following. 'The incident still plays on my mind', 'I couldn't shake it' and 'I think about it all the time' (Self-reports, Aboriginal females). Additionally, at least 25% of incidents were identified as occurring on an ongoing basis (see Table 6) - likely to intensify emotional responses. The Aboriginal female teacher who had experienced racism and ostracism at work over a number of years (see above [2.4]) described the impacts of these experiences as follows.

I have been on Work Cover for more than two years and my mental health has been impacted significantly. I have lost all self-confidence and am afraid of what will happen if I go back into that environment again. I am on medication which I have never been

before, I have always been a happy, social person. So, what has happened to me has had a long-lasting effect on me and my health. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

As this last comment illustrates, there were reports of a lowering of self-esteem and of trust – in work colleagues, institutions etc. These feelings are likely to sit across a number of the above emotional responses (including feeling humiliated, isolated and helpless). Comments made in this context include the following. ‘Thinking I’m a useless and worthless Aboriginal person’, ‘Makes me feel worthless, makes me think I’m no good and my kids will never get ahead when they get older’, ‘Feeling less confident which has reduced my private and professional life’ and ‘loss of faith in Australia as a country that should have left this type thing behind’ (Self-reports, Aboriginal males).

Overall, many of the emotional responses captured in Table 11 would appear likely to make it difficult to challenge racism (discussed further in the following section). These emotional responses, including fear and a feeling of helplessness, are also exacerbated when reports or complaints of racism are poorly responded to (also discussed below). As an example, one Aboriginal female reported to her HR department a comment made to her by a person working in her organisation. The comment was that citronella should be used against Aboriginal people in Darwin as ‘it’s the only way to get rid of dogs’. The woman in question did not get a good outcome – on the contrary, she identified being subjected to further racism during HR processes that followed. This made her feel ‘helpless that someone could say something directly racist to me and get away with it’. Another Aboriginal female reported an ‘intimidating email tactic in response to feedback’ she had provided at her workplace ‘on the approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity’. This ‘reinforced the already in place feelings that speaking up is dangerous’.

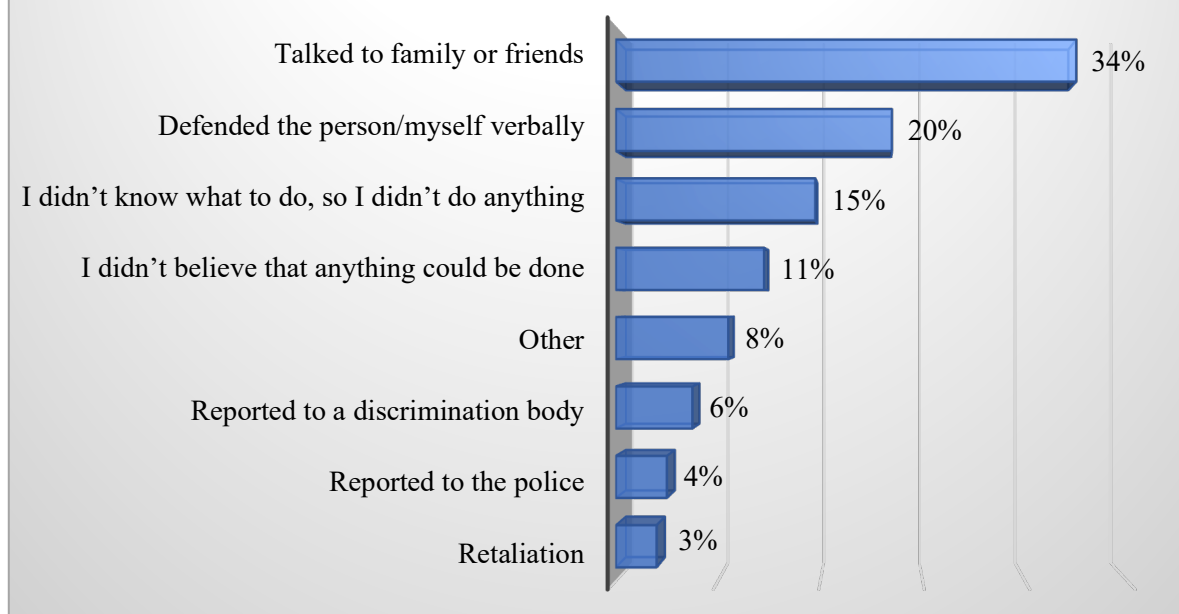
Those completing the Register were asked whether and how they responded to racism by reporting the incident, talking with people, etc. from a choice of 8 responses including ‘other’. More than half (154 or 58%) of those filling in the Register completed this question, and half of those people (77) made multiple responses (267).

**Table 12 Response to incident**

	N	%
Talked to family or friends	90	34
Defended the person/myself verbally	54	20
I didn’t know what to do, so I didn’t do anything	39	15
I didn’t believe that anything could be done	29	11
Other	22	8
Reported to a discrimination body	15	6
Reported to the police	10	4
Retaliation	8	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=154; Responses N=267.

Table 12 and Figure 12 show that the most common response (34%) was to talk with family and friends about the incident. One in five responses (20%) involved the person verbally defending themselves. Reporting an incident to either an anti-discrimination body (6%) or the police (4%) comprised one in ten responses, while slightly more than one in ten responses reflected a belief that nothing can be done (11%).

**Figure 12 Response to incident**

## Calling out racism

The importance of calling out racism was emphasised in many reports made through the Register. One Aboriginal male stated as follows. 'I shared my story on [social media] and one of the moderators there pointed out [*Call It Out*] to me to share my story. If not justice, then at least [making this report gives me] catharsis.'

As noted in Table 11, those reporting racism on the Register felt motivated to bring about change and/or solidarity with others experiencing racism. Some Aboriginal people reported challenging racism, and in different ways – not just through formal reports to police or discrimination bodies. One Aboriginal male described his anger at being told he could not purchase a lamb dish at an RSL as it was no longer available and being given the pork meal instead. He saw the lamb meal sitting in the serving window at the time and later, two non-Aboriginal patrons both eating this meal. His response was as follows.

It made me resolve to fight harder against racism and inequity. Also, to contact the RSL to demand that kangaroo be included in menus as a Recognition of First Nations cuisine. (Self-report, Aboriginal male).

As a further example, one Aboriginal male suggested that when racist incidents occur one strategy is to 'immediately invoke the traditions of the world's oldest continuous culture' by, for example, '1/responding in First Nations language' and/or '2/opening shirt to show proud colour of skin'. There are other reports by Aboriginal people that refer to directly challenging those perpetrating racism – in the workplace, in universities etc. An Aboriginal female also identified resilience in the face of racism as making decisions about what incidents to call out and how to 'let it go'.

When I was younger, it effected my identity and self-value/self-love. But as I've gotten older, I've learned how to deal with it better... How to move forward and how to use my resilience and how to be proud (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Anger was expressed by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people reporting racism on the Register as witnesses and on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, alongside

a desire to challenge it. Their reports described actions taken in this context, with varying degrees of effectiveness, as the following examples indicate.

We were sitting downstairs in the Members Stand at [NSW sports stadium] watching the Swans. A First Nations player on the opposing team dropped a mark .... A man sitting behind us with his friends shouted out 'Hah! The monkey dropped the banana'. [A yellow football was being used in the match]. His friends all started to laugh. We turned and glared, and I said something like 'Seriously?!' and an elderly man sitting next to them said something like 'There's no place for that kind of language.' The man who made the racist comment said, 'You can't have fun anywhere anymore' and turned to look at his friends for support, who had started to look uncomfortable. I said to my sister I was going to report it. As I was standing up a female sitting at the end of the row stood up and said, 'I'll go.' The group of men left the area before the ushers came back with the female. (Witness report).

I witnessed a man shouting and screaming and holding a man down. I assumed it was two men fighting as they were both in civilian dress. When I called out a second man in plain clothes came over to me and identified as a police officer when I asked to see his badge. He explained that the other officer was arresting the man for an incident I did not witness. I said I thought that the other officer was using excessive force considering he already had him in a hold. I was told to report it to the nearest police station, who told me report it to the Police Ombudsman, which I did. Several days later, I received a phone call from [a] sergeant for 'a chat'. His first words to me were 'Oh we know the individual and he's an Aborigine'. I immediately reported this second incident to the Ombudsman who agreed to re-open the case. However, at no stage was I interviewed but the two officers involved were because their story changed about the incident, and I was informed the case had been closed. I took the case up with the Police Commissioner, but their response was that they do not tolerate racism. The sergeant never denied his comments and to the best of my knowledge he was never admonished or given appropriate training. (Witness report).

## **Barriers to calling racism out**

As the last example indicates, it can be difficult to call racism out and get a satisfactory result. This was a very common theme throughout reports in the Register. For a start, processes of reporting or complaining about racism may be unknown (as Table 12 data indicates), or reports or complaints of racism once made may go unheard or be responded to inappropriately. The parent whose son had passed away after discharge from hospital (above [2.4]), for example, was critical of the subsequent internal inquiry.

Government, institutions, agencies, public can deny it but it's real, it is bred in people of this country and others. You read reports and wonder why they use fancy words. It's to make all the injustices against First Nations people sound like mistakes or excuses. Wiping out our people has been happening for years and it's still happening, and no one is ever charged over it. The law is not there to protect First Nations people because it's still a law established many years ago and still bound by colonial rule in my opinion. (Report of friend or relative).

An Aboriginal male who was continually bullied by his non-Aboriginal manager at work described the lack of support he received after raising a complaint with his employer as follows. His comment also indicates that others might stand by and witness but do nothing about racism.



Many witnessed her being a bully throughout the agency, even senior staff. Yet all did nothing. I got so fed up I eventually walked straight into the head of the agency's office to ask for help saying my job had become untenable. He was an Aboriginal male, so I thought he might be understanding, but that didn't mean a thing. The head of the agency went out of their way to avoid meeting me for two weeks until I gave up reporting the bully. I also spoke to HR. Nobody wanted to know about it or help me. (Self-report, Aboriginal male).

Those reporting or retaliating<sup>4</sup> against racism may be sanctioned or face other negative consequences. The Aboriginal female who reported her car windscreen being smashed and vilification by pub-goers (above [2.3]) indicated that when she reported this to police, rather than being assisted she was 'considered the angry black female by police and threatened to be arrested. No follow up and nothing done about the incident.' The following is an example of sanctioning in a school setting.

Within school system Indigenous kid suspended for snapping at a non-Indigenous kid who'd been calling him names such as ape - got sick of it so punched him in the guts so was suspended for violence - white kid got nothing. (Witness report).

## Avoidance

A sizeable proportion of reports recorded not doing anything in response to racism because it was thought that nothing could be done (11%) or not knowing what to do so nothing was done (15%). In these situations, or where a complaint or report has not been effective, a common response reported is to remove oneself from places and situations to avoid racism. Multiple reports described Aboriginal people changing jobs or leaving employment altogether, dropping out of or not attending classes at a university or other educational institution and/or taking a break from social media. Also identified was having to hide one's Aboriginal identity, particularly in the workplace, to avoid racism.

I see so much hatred and stereotyping online, so many racist comments in some groups ... that the only way to cope is to leave those groups and I've even on occasion deleted [named platform] for a few weeks ... So many comments with no understanding or context to what is said ... I have no idea how, with so much social media influence, keyboard warriors will ever stop the nasty and hurtful words. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Apart from the emotional toll of this avoidance behaviour, it also has more practical implications like loss of employment and financial stress (see also [3.1]). Deliberately avoiding commercial places (shops, pubs, etc.) following discrimination was also reported. One Aboriginal female recorded being followed by security in a store, which 'happens regularly when I wear clothes that clearly make me look Aboriginal, like NAIDOC shirts'. She went on to state 'I avoid shopping around the area now. Don't want to feel like I'm a criminal when I just want to be a normal patron.'

The Register also contained a question on how to combat racism. The response rate was relatively low with 54 (20%) of the 267 registrants completing this question. Multiple selections were made by 49 of the 54 respondents and there were a total of 346 responses.

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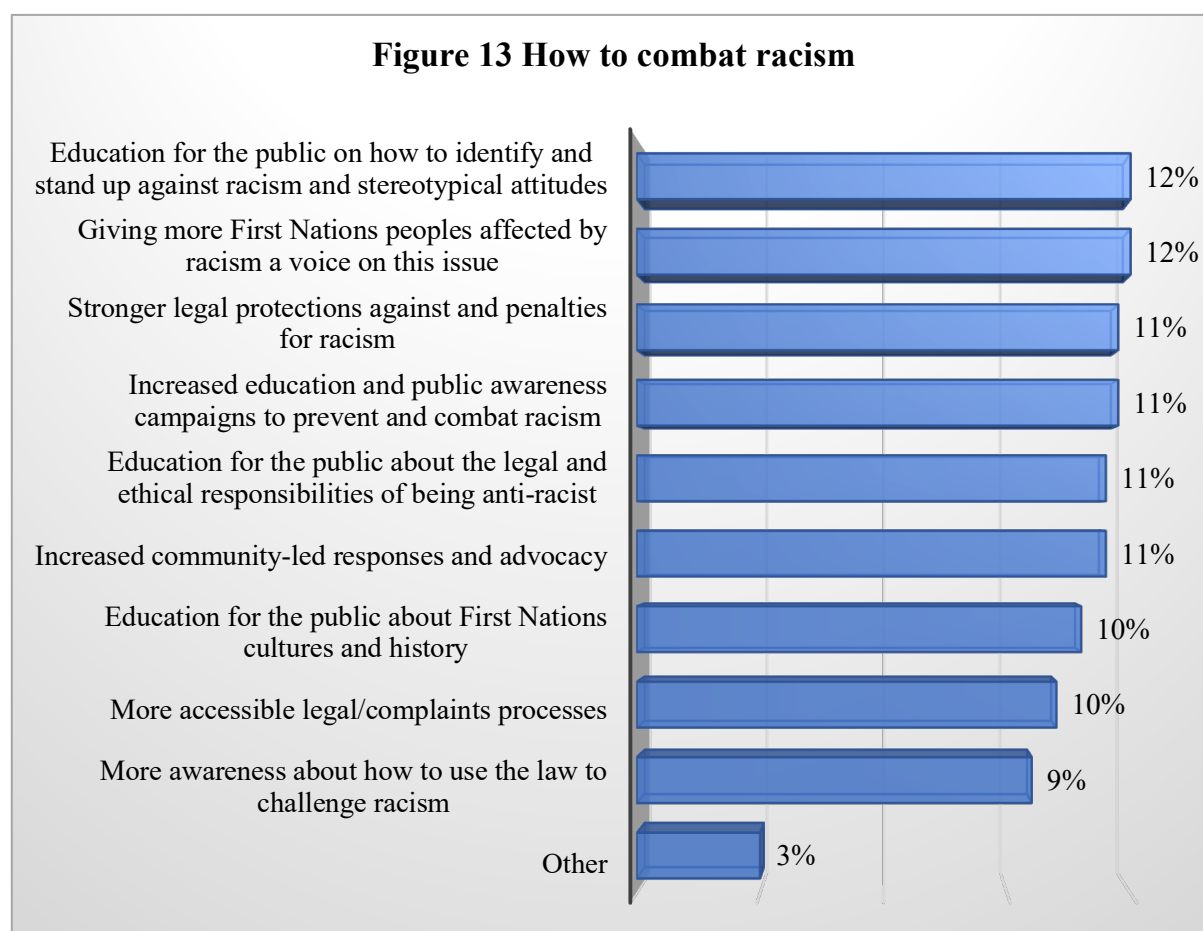
<sup>4</sup> Retaliation is recorded as a response in 3% of reports (see Table 12), and much more frequently by men than women (see Table 19).

**Table 13 How to combat racism**

	N	%
Education for the public on how to identify and stand up against racism and stereotypical attitudes	40	12
Giving more First Nations peoples affected by racism a voice on this issue	40	12
Stronger legal protections against and penalties for racism	39	11
Increased education and public awareness campaigns to prevent and combat racism	39	11
Education for the public about the legal and ethical responsibilities of being anti-racist	38	11
Increased community-led responses and advocacy	38	11
Education for the public about First Nations cultures and history	36	10
More accessible legal/complaints processes	34	10
More awareness about how to use the law to challenge racism	32	9
Other	10	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=54; Responses N=346.

Table 13 and Figure 13 show that most people who answered this question selected multiple answers and as a result all the options were selected without much differentiation. There were only 3 percentage points differentiating the most common responses (i.e., ‘Education for the public on how to identify and stand up against racism and stereotypical attitudes’ and ‘Giving more First Nations peoples affected by racism a voice on this issue’) (both 12%) and the least common response, ‘More awareness about how to use the law to challenge racism’ (9%).

**Figure 13 How to combat racism**

## Rights based approaches

A number of reports highlighted strategies that might be broadly identified as rights based. These include increasing awareness about how to use the law to challenge racism, stronger legal protections and penalties for racism and more accessible legal/complaints processes.

The importance of legal and other advocacy, including advocacy led by Aboriginal organisations, and reporting processes that are better able to support Aboriginal people experiencing racism (and to protect them from possible retaliation) was highlighted in reports. One Aboriginal female championed ‘better systems for victims to report, be believed and support for victims’. Other examples are as follows.

Racism needs to be called out ... There needs to be information on where we can go to get help or to speak to someone that will listen and believe our stories and what happened to us. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

There should be more effective mechanisms for protection, and conclusions that conduct was racist should be able to be drawn from a pattern of behaviour/outcomes as it is difficult often to prove racism in circumstances where the perpetrator does not themselves link their actions to racist attitudes. (Witness report).

There needs to be a way that you/I can do something about this without risking your employment. A process to file a complaint that won’t impact on you losing your job. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

There was also a call for greater accountability and increased (and more serious) consequences for those perpetrating racism. Reports to the Register spoke of the need for ‘vigorous action against formal bodies such as churches and hospitals’, ‘Tough fines’, ‘sanctions’, ‘harsh penalties’, ‘real tangible consequences’ and ‘more people getting convicted of racial harassment and inciting racism’. Other comments were as follows.

I exhausted internal complaints mechanisms which perpetrated further racism but needed to be pursued ... CONSEQUENCES are the answer. White people need to stop letting each other off the hook for perpetrating racism and get real with being accountable and having proportionate consequences to the wrongdoing and accumulative wrong doings. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Definitely there needs to be penalties for people who mistreat others due to racism. Everyone that hurt me are still in their positions and I’m out on stress leave, nothing ever gets done about it. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

One suggested strategy aimed at increasing consequences was for establishment of a register of racist companies that would then be boycotted.

Name and shame. Visibility is needed. I personally would utilise a Register of companies that have had actions taken against them, have proven to be known racists and boycott those places - refusing to work for them or purchase goods from them. I choose to have no association with people that hold those views in my personal life and would like that control in my working life too, nothing worse than having to be silent for fear of losing your employment. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

This last example points to possible strategies for those experiencing racism to utilise outside of reporting or complaints mechanisms. Other community-based or led approaches to combatting racism were raised. One Aboriginal female stated, for example, that Aboriginal people can support each other ‘to express and deal with’ racism. ‘I think the issue is too big for a simple solution but if we as a people are stronger ... we can combat it together.’ Similarly, a

‘me-too movement’ to combat racism was also discussed. These types of approaches will be explored in more detail in our annual reporting on *Call It Out*.

White people need to stop being defensive. People who raise racism need to stop being ‘the problem’. We need a me too movement but for workplace racism, I swear! (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

## Everyone’s responsibility

Reports pointed to strategies that would ensure more collective responsibility for combating racism, including for the broader public and government. One Aboriginal female stated, ‘It can’t be up to mob to constantly defend our existence’. These reports often focused on education in the workplace, schools and elsewhere to help prevent racism. This incorporated education about past and ongoing racism against Aboriginal people and about Aboriginal culture. Comments were as follows.

Education starting in mid-primary and slowly evolving into high school in the real history of this country, what really happened, how cruel and un-human British colonisation was and still is. (Self-report, gender unknown).

I think everyone in Australia should be made to learn about Aboriginal people and our history then maybe they’ll have a better understanding as to why/how we do things differently, and we shouldn’t be made to feel different because of our ways. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Potential political and legislative reform required to combat racism was identified by Aboriginal people as including ‘First Nations rights’ (including land rights) and development of ‘Policy that works for us’ and is ‘created by us’. As a specific example of this policy approach, the Aboriginal female who reported racism in the child protection assessment framework pushed for much greater Aboriginal input into decisions about policy development and implementation.

There needs to be change within the Department itself. The main issue is the lack of representation of First Nations people at the higher levels of decision making [to address] ... discriminatory views towards First Nations people. There needs to be changes in the entire structure of the organisation to empower First Nations people and perspectives. [The agency] does not properly consider the kinship structures of First Nations families and views things too narrowly, just looking at a child in isolation rather than considering how to make changes and maintain connections across the whole family. Judgements on First Nations family members are often based on stereotypes. There is no understanding that people can grow and change. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Listening to Aboriginal voices was also identified as crucial to addressing racism at an individual and community level. The ‘Voice to Parliament’ was raised in this context, as was the following in a workplace context.

Institutions that hold power need to listen to those who experience racism on how to handle it, not impose their ideas on how to manage racism. Self-determination needs to be upheld. I was forced to sit down with the racist, my manager (white man), the Head of HR (another white man) all 30 years older than me and I had to listen to the racist deny he said anything to me and gaslight me. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

### 3. Self-Reports by Gender

In this final section of the report we look more specifically at the people who completed the *Call It Out* Register and self-reported racism. Thus, we have omitted from the following discussion third party reports of racism. The reason for doing this is that it provides for a clearer analysis of the direct experience of racism. Further we have broken down the data by gender to see the extent of difference in experience between women and men.

#### 3.1 Reports of racism by gender

Table 1 above showed that 52% of all reports on the Register were self-reports. Table 14 below shows the gender of victims who self-reported where gender was recorded (134). Women were nearly twice as likely as men to self-report experiences of racism (63% compared to 34%) while 3% of those who self-reported identified their gender in another way.

**Table 14 Gender of the victims who self-reported**

	N	%
Female	85	63
Male	45	34
In another way	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=134.

Table 15 shows the type of racism experienced by gender. Of the 134 respondents, 81 experienced more than one type of racism. The most significant difference by gender was that women were more likely to report negative attitudes and stereotyping than men (19% compared to 12%). In general there was little difference in the reports on the type of racism by gender.

**Table 15 Type of racism experienced by victims who self-reported**

	Female		Male		In another way		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Discrimination	44	17	25	17	2	33	71	17
Negative attitudes or stereotyping	48	19	18	12	1	17	67	16
Bullying	26	10	17	11	0	0	43	10
Institutional Racism	27	11	12	8	1	17	40	10
Verbal abuse	19	7	13	9	1	17	33	8
Didn't recognise cultural rights	20	8	12	8	0	0	32	8
Shunning you or excluding you	20	8	12	8	0	0	32	8
Hate speech	15	6	14	9	1	17	30	7
Threats or intimidation	12	5	9	6	0	0	21	5
Other	11	4	6	4	0	0	17	4
Physical abuse, assault or attack	7	3	6	4	0	0	13	3
Property damage or vandalism	6	2	4	3	0	0	10	2
Graffiti	2	1	2	1	0	0	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=134; Responses N=413.

Table 15 also shows that there were only two categories where there were 3 percentage points difference: women were proportionately more likely to report institutional racism (11% compared to 8%) and men were more likely to report hate speech (9% compared to 6%). In all other reporting categories the differences between men and women were two percentage points or less.

Table 16 shows the differences in where the incident occurred by gender. Women were almost twice as likely to report racism in the workplace than men (36% compared to 19%). They were also proportionately more likely to report racism in a private setting than men (14% compared to 6%). Although the numbers and percentage differences were small, women were also more likely than men to report racism when interacting with government institutions or service providers (5% compared to 2%).

**Table 16 Where the incident occurred for victims who self-reported**

	Female		Male		In another way		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
In a workplace	35	36	10	19	2	50	47	31
In a commercial place	14	14	12	23	1	25	27	18
In a private place	14	14	3	6	0	0	17	11
Online	3	3	7	13	0	0	10	7
In a police station, courthouse or prison	5	5	5	10	0	0	10	7
On public transport	4	4	3	6	1	25	8	5
In a hospital or other medical centre	5	5	2	4	0	0	7	5
Interacting with government institution or service provider	5	5	1	2	0	0	6	4
In the Media	2	2	3	6	0	0	5	3
In a public place	2	2	3	6	0	0	5	3
In a school or other educational place	3	3	1	2	0	0	4	3
Other	3	3	1	2	0	0	4	3
Unknown	2	2	1	2	0	0	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=102; Responses N=153.

Workplace racism was reported as a major issue for Aboriginal women and as we noted previously in this report, the result can cause women affected by racism to leave their employment entirely, causing financial stressors. As one Aboriginal female stated, 'I know of many other Aboriginal teachers in my own area that are no longer teachers due to the racism in the Department of Education.' Another Aboriginal female who had her Aboriginality questioned at work reported leaving her employment after '6 months of anxiety every day. Have now resigned so am now financially burdened.' While other women referred to systemic racism affecting both their career development in health and health services provided to Aboriginal people.

As Aboriginal Health Workers in [named State] Health we are not given the opportunities to fulfill our roles even at high levels of experience. We are held back. There is institutional racism that we fight constantly, and this impedes clients from feeling safe to utilise the hospital services. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).



In contrast to women, Table 16 shows that men were proportionately more likely to report racism in a commercial place (23% compared to 14%), online (13% compared to 3%) and in a police station, courthouse or prison (10% compared to 5%).

Table 17 shows who the perpetrator was for victims who self-reported by gender. An employee of an organisation was identified most frequently for both groups (women 19% and men 20%). Consistent with Table 16 above on workplace racism, women were more likely than men to report the perpetrator as being an employer or colleague (19% compared to 14%). Women were also more likely to nominate a health service employee as a perpetrator of racism than men who reported (13% compared to 7%). For example, an Aboriginal woman reported bullying in a health workplace as follows.

We had a new manager that had changed from the secured forensic mental health unit ... She told us that she had left as she was ‘bullied’ as the clinical lead. Much later we found out she felt ‘bullying’ was people of culturally diverse backgrounds reporting her for misconduct and racism ... For the next 6 months she would target me, discriminate against me and bully me. Other people who witnessed it did not speak up. However [they] did raise their concerns with me and one female reported that she suspected it was because I was an Aboriginal female. I tried to ignore it, was told to be more of a ‘yes person’ when I advocated for Aboriginal clients and when [she] found out I was related to a well-known person who was incarcerated into the prison she said, ‘Why would you tell people you were related to him, I do not blame you if you choose not to identify if that is your family.’ I love my community. People make mistakes, most Indigenous people in custody are there on remand or in there for alcohol or drug related offenses that can include violence. It honestly really concerned me that this female did not know why First Nations people are victims of inter-generational trauma from the colonisation of this country. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

**Table 17 Who was the perpetrator for victims who self-reported**

	Female		Male		In another way		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employee of an organisation	30	19	17	20	2	40	49	20
Employer or colleague	30	19	12	14	1	20	43	17
Government authority/institution	23	15	10	12	0	0	33	13
Health service employee	21	13	6	7	0	0	27	11
Member of the public unknown to me	16	10	8	10	0	0	24	10
Someone known to me	11	7	5	6	1	20	17	7
School/educational place employee	10	6	4	5	0	0	14	6
Other non-government service provider or organisation	4	3	5	6	0	0	9	4
Police officer	4	3	5	6	0	0	9	4
Justice setting	4	3	3	4	0	0	7	3
Unknown	2	1	4	5	1	20	7	3
Media outlet	2	1	3	4	0	0	5	2
Other	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=122; Responses N=246.

Although the numbers and percentage differences were smaller, Table 17 also shows that men were more proportionately likely than women to report perpetrators in non-government service providers (6% compared to 3%) and police officers (6% compared to 3%). Both men and women reported that unknown members of the public were perpetrators of racism in 10% of cases.

## 3.2 Responding to racism

Table 18 shows the responses to the question about how the incident made the victims feel. Only 22% (29/134) of this group chose to respond to this question and most of those chose multiple responses (27) to the question. For both men and women, the most frequent feelings were anger (17% women and 16% men) and disappointment (15% women and 13% men). Feeling humiliated was experienced almost equally among women and men (10% women and 9% men).

Overall, there was very little difference by gender in the feelings associated with racism. Men were slightly more likely than women to report feeling helpless (11% compared to 8%) and resigned to racism being an everyday event (11% compared to 7%). Conversely, women were somewhat more likely than men to report feeling shamed (9% women and 4% men) and sad (8% women and 4% men).

**Table 18 How the incident made victims who self-reported feel\***

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Angry	19	17	7	16	26	17
Disappointed	16	15	6	13	22	14
Humiliated	11	10	4	9	15	10
Helpless	9	8	5	11	14	9
Feel resigned to racism being an everyday event	8	7	5	11	13	8
Motivated to bring about change	9	8	4	9	13	8
Shame	10	9	2	4	12	8
Sad	9	8	2	4	11	7
Afraid	7	6	3	7	10	6
Isolated	7	6	3	7	10	6
Solidarity with others	4	4	3	7	7	5
Other	1	1	1	2	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=29; Responses N=155.

\*None of the respondents to this question identified their gender as 'in another way'.

Examples of comments shared by Aboriginal women about depression, shame and isolation suffered as a result of racism are captured in the following narratives.

I had a mental breakdown. I was hospitalised due to feeling suicidal twice. I had to defer my university studies for 4 years and I had to switch from social work to a Bachelor of Arts majoring in criminology and human services. I lost my Wawu (spirit), and faith and trust in non-Indigenous people and I isolated myself from people because I felt so shamed. I had a mental break down. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).



It has depressed me and made me feel frustrated and disconnected from society. I feel like racism is rampant in our town and society and I don't wish to associate with anyone who uses such terms. The fact that the incidents have happened within the workplace have made me less friendly and more guarded around my colleagues. The last three workplaces I have been employed in all have had people there in positions of power that use derogatory terms when referring to Aboriginal people. It's very depressing feeling that everyone around me is a racist or covert one. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Returning once again to the Aboriginal woman who described property damage and vilification by pub-goers (above [2.3]), her report described the sadness she felt for her children targeted during this incident.

It made all of us feel angry as we knew it was racist. It hurt me mostly as my 13 year old daughter asked if that had happened because we were black and that made me realise that was her first real experience of racism and that is just the start of an ongoing issue that she will now have to deal with. (Self-report, Aboriginal female).

Table 19 indicates the responses of women and men subject to racism. The most frequent response for women was to talk with family and friends (39% women compared to 20% men). Men were proportionately more likely to defend themselves verbally (25% men compared to 17% women) or to retaliate than women (12% men, no women indicated retaliation as a response).

Men were also slightly more likely to believe that nothing could be done (16% men compared to 11% women). For both men and women more than one in ten responded that they didn't know what to do, so didn't do anything in response to the racism (14% women compared to 12% men).

**Table 19 How victims who self-reported responded to the incident**

	Female		Male		In another way		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Talked to family or friends	41	39	10	20	1	17	52	32
Defended the person/myself verbally	18	17	13	25	1	17	32	20
I didn't know what to do, so I didn't do anything	15	14	6	12	2	33	23	14
I didn't believe that anything could be done	11	11	8	16	1	17	20	12
Other	9	9	2	4	0	0	11	7
Reported to a discrimination body	6	6	3	6	0	0	9	6
Reported to the police	4	4	3	6	0	0	7	4
Retaliation	0	0	6	12	1	17	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=86; Responses N=161.

Table 20 shows the responses to the question of what needs to be done to combat racism. Only 20% (27/134) of the self-reported group chose to respond to this question and most of those (25) chose multiple responses to the question. Both men and women nominated stronger legal protections against and penalties for racism (13% women and 12% men). Although the recorded numbers were small, men were proportionately more likely than women to nominate increased education and public awareness campaigns to prevent and combat racism (14% men

compared to 11% women) and education for the public about First Nations cultures and history (14% men compared to 9% women).

As one Aboriginal man stated, ‘People need to be educated, they need to have compassion and understanding as to why Aboriginal people don’t open up to or have nothing but distrust towards Government organisations or staff’ (Self-report, Aboriginal male). Another commented, ‘The wider community needs to accept this [racism] is happening all the time. Many people are still in denial of racism happening in Australia’ (Self-report, Aboriginal male).

Women were proportionately more likely than men to nominate giving more First Nations peoples affected by racism a voice on this issue (13% women compared to 7% men). There was very little difference by gender to the other responses.

**Table 20 What needs to be done to combat racism by victims who self-reported\***

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Stronger legal protections against and penalties for racism	17	13	5	12	22	13
Giving more First Nations peoples affected by racism a voice on this issue	17	13	3	7	20	11
Education for the public on how to identify and stand up against racism and stereotypical attitudes	15	11	5	12	20	11
Increased education and public awareness campaigns to prevent and combat racism	14	11	6	14	20	11
Education for the public about the legal and ethical responsibilities of being anti-racist	14	11	5	12	19	11
More accessible legal/complaints processes	15	11	4	9	19	11
Increased community-led responses and advocacy	15	11	4	9	19	11
Education for the public about First Nations cultures and history	12	9	6	14	18	10
More awareness about how to use the law to challenge racism	13	10	4	9	17	10
Other	1	1	1	2	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents N=27; Responses N=176.

\*None of the respondents to this question identified their gender as ‘in another way’

## 4. Conclusion / Executive Summary

This Interim Report is based on 267 reports of racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. More than half the reports (52%) were made by the person who experienced racism, while the remainder were made by witnesses of racism or friends or relatives of the person who experienced racism. The types of racism most frequently reported were stereotyping, discrimination, and institutional racism (46%). Aggressively racist behaviour was also evident – taken together physical and verbal abuse, hate speech, bullying, threats, intimidation and damage to property comprised 34% of responses.

Workplace racism was the single most reported place for the occurrence of racism (26%), followed by commercial locations (17%). The most frequently nominated perpetrators were also employees and employers who combined comprised 34% of identified perpetrators. Government institutions were nominated in 13% of cases, followed by unknown members of the public (11%). Health service employees stood out as a group and were more frequently identified as perpetrators of racism than police, educational employees or other government or non-government service providers. Women were more likely to be identified as a perpetrator than men (41% compared to 33%).

The victims of racism were more likely to be women (55% women compared to 35% men). We explicitly explored the gender dimension of racism by focussing only on the 134 self-reports of racism (through an analysis which excluded third party reports made by witnesses and family and friends). Women comprised nearly two thirds of the self-reports (63% women compared to 34% men). In general, there was little difference in the reports on the type of racism by gender. However, women were almost twice as likely to report racism in the workplace than men (36% compared to 19%) and they were also proportionately more likely to report racism in a private setting than men (14% compared to 6%). There was very little difference by gender in the feelings associated with racism, nor with what needs to be done to combat racism.

Alongside the above data, the stories shared on the Register describe the profound impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the all too common problem of racism. The incidents reported place racism in many familiar settings – in small private gatherings, on the street and social media; in shops, cafes and buses, hospital beds and classrooms; and in government and other institutions. They identify racism as more systemic in nature and as interpersonal – as conversations overheard by and/or as comments or violence directed at individuals, for instance. Impacts are described as both emotional and more practical, leading to exclusion and isolation, financial stress, deep sadness, physical harm and feelings of worthlessness, as just some examples. Aboriginal people reporting more systemic racism identify it as impacting on the ‘cultural fabric’ of Aboriginal communities.

The stories shared also point to the importance of calling out racism, including through the Register. Giving voice to experiences of racism through this platform and otherwise provides some antidote to the considerable negative impacts of racism, with one Aboriginal man referring to making a report on *Call It Out* as a ‘catharsis’. Calling out racism is also important as society at large is still very much in denial about its existence, as many reports indicated. The reports indicate too that there is much more work to be done to create safe and constructive spaces in which racism can be effectively challenged. Greater awareness, support, advocacy and protection for people who have experienced racism are all required in this context.

Alongside voices of First Nations peoples, the Register has also heard from many witnesses of racism, including non-Aboriginal people. These voices are important too, including as they

corroborate Aboriginal accounts of racism and make an important contribution to calling out racism. This was evident in a health setting, for instance, where reports from both consumer and employee perspectives identified racist stereotyping of Aboriginal patients by doctors and nurses and the (sometimes fatal) impacts this stereotyping has on medical treatment.

It is heartening to see multiple accounts in the Register from witnesses who stepped up and challenged racism in real life situations. This stepping in and up by witnesses is an important mechanism through which collective responsibility for reducing racism against First Nations peoples may be realised. This was a key theme in solutions put forward for combating racism: that we all have a part to play, including government and other institutions, in avoiding and reducing racism. On a final note, a positive way forward identified in the Register are approaches that bring together those impacted by racism to draw and build on their resilience and their sense of solidarity arising from their shared experiences of racism.