

Ten steps towards challenging racism in Australia today

1. Becoming Informed

- The theme of the [2003 Catholic Social Justice Sunday statement](#) is: *Challenging Racism in Australia Today*.
- The National Council of Churches has produced an ecumenical resource kit for Social Justice Sunday. The title is *Subverting Racism*.
- The National NGO Coalition Against Racism has produced the kit: *A Fair Go – A Community Kit Against Racism*.
- Previous *Ten Steps Towards ...* publications include:
 - *Ten Steps Towards Reconciliation*
 - *Ten Steps Towards Welcoming Asylum Seekers*.

2. Surfing the Net

Numerous sites exist where information and activities can be accessed.

- Racism. No way! project for school communities and education systems www.racismnoway.com.au
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission www.humanrights.gov.au
- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights www.ohchr.org
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Council www.fecca.org.au.

3. Recognising Difference as Gift

Culture, language, religion and nationality provide us with identity and self-confidence, shaping our relationships with one another and the world. People from many lands have enriched Australia, creating a multicultural nation. We can delight in our own heritage and culture while recognising the contribution other cultures can make to Australia.

4. Becoming Action-Oriented

- Work to overcome racism and oppression, not just to calm things down or make people feel better.
- Identify and address our own tendencies towards racism.
- Identify and address racism in the systems and organisations to which we already belong.
- Every day, reach out to someone who is different from you.

5. Challenging Structural Racism

Look at the organisation and administrative structure of the workplace, parish, community, neighbourhood to discover inequalities and how they manifest themselves. Understand the reasons for these inequalities with a view to eliminating them. The existence of discrimination does not necessarily result from anybody's particular will, but may be the result of a structural defect. Establish a procedure to change structures in a way that improves the integration of people from ethnic minorities.

6. Welcoming the Stranger

Ensure that the newcomer to our parish, school, workplace, neighbourhood, community has an experience of welcome, not of rejection or exclusion. Consider what practices need to be

in place for this to happen. Learn the names of those who look different from us and learn how to pronounce them correctly. Listen to other people's stories, experiences and realities.

7. Respecting Others' Beliefs and Cultures

Respect the right of all persons to choose and to exercise their own religion. Respect their faith and religious views. The diversity of culture in Australia enriches our nation and offers a great variety of experience and opportunity.

8. Watching our Language

- Become aware of the language we use. Use appropriate and sensitive language.
- Speak up every time against racist words and deeds and discrimination.
- An inherently racist bias can underpin what we say: "I'm not racist but ..."
- Be aware of and evaluate the language and content of textbooks, teaching materials, newspapers, magazines, television programs.

9. Enjoying and Contributing to Australia's Multiculturalism

- Join in the ethnic celebrations and festivals in the local community or neighbourhood.
- Ensure that the local parish and schools celebrate:
 - Reconciliation Week (May 27 to June 3)
 - Aboriginal Sunday and NAIDOC Week (early July)
 - Refugee and Migrant Sunday (late August).

10. Prayer

- Use the accompanying [Prayer Card](#) prepared by the ACSJC for personal prayer, in schools and parishes, and for family and group prayer time.
- Encourage your parish to include prayer for overcoming racism in the Sunday Celebration.
- In parishes and schools, provide opportunities for hymns and prayers of other nations to be included in liturgies and prayer services.
- Pray for both those who are the targets of racism and those who perpetrate it.

