

Third-party reporting: What is it and why is it important?

The Commission's recommendation to the Eames Review

Based on stakeholder feedback, research and complaints data, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission understands that Victorians of certain faiths and racial backgrounds regularly experience offensive, insulting, humiliating or intimidating conduct.

In the [Commission's submission to the 2010 Review of Identity Motivated Hate Crime](#) undertaken by Justice Geoffrey Eames (the Eames Review), one key recommendation was the:

establishment of third-party reporting procedures to encourage greater reporting of hate conduct to better evaluate the extent and nature of hate conduct.

The Commission's recommendation to the Eames Review was based on findings that restricted data collection systems and processes, combined with problems with recording and reporting hate crime by the community, hinders understanding about the nature and extent of hate crime in Victoria. This also leads to a diminished understanding of the Victorian community's perception of hate crime and its causes.

The development and enhancement of third-party reporting mechanisms would improve data capture of acts of racial vilification, hatred and offensive behaviour, and make it simpler to report on racial vilification where and when it occurs.

Reporting Racism project aims

This project will:

- collect data on racial vilification and offensive or humiliating conduct motivated by hatred or prejudice on the basis of race or religion
- review incidents of racial and religious vilification online and in the media
- analyse the effectiveness of existing legislation to deal with racial and religious hate crime and conduct
- build the capacity of community organisations to implement third-party processes for reporting racial and religious hate crime and conduct in the Australian community
- inform the Commission's input to the [National Anti-Racism Strategy for Australia](#).
- contribute to the implementation of the Victoria Policy Prejudice-Motivated Crime Strategy 2011–13.

What is third-party reporting and why is it important?

Third-party reporting provides a mechanism to report hate crime and offensive incidents to the police or other organisations (like the Commission) on an indirect basis. This means that people can report incidents to community organisations (the

reporting centre), and the police will only investigate the incident if the person consents. Many different places can be reporting centres, such as council offices, synagogues, neighbourhood watch centres, churches, temples and mosques.

For example, in Victoria, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) is part of a Jewish community partnership that collates incidents of anti-Semitic incidents as they occur. Similarly, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) collates information about anti-Muslim hate crimes.

Third-party reporting is a well-established system in the UK, where different counties and metropolitan councils have set up third-party reporting systems for local communities. See:

- [Race Hate Crime Forum Annual Report 2007–08](#) (UK)
- [Third-party reporting by Dorset Police](#) (UK)
- [Third-party reporting by Directgov](#) (UK)

From the UK experience, reports of hate crime can be made via telephone, online or at a reporting centre. See, for example, [Cumbria Constabulary \(UK\) self-reporting form](#).

The role of third-party reporting mechanisms is important in building community confidence and collecting information about hate crime and hate incidents (which are incidents or conduct that might not reach the threshold of 'crime', but have a serious negative impact on a particular community or group).