

DCJ Anti-Racism Taskforce – approach to eliminate racism within DCJ

Background

The Executive Board of the Department of Communities and Justice identified racism as a key strategic problem for the department. A taskforce was established to better understand these experiences, identify solutions to address and eliminate occurrences of racism and develop strategies to create systemic and structural change to create a culturally safe working environment.

The taskforce met monthly to identify strengths and opportunities to address the following topics:

- How do we effect cultural change?
- Changes to structural and decision making processes
- How to create safe environments
- Implementation issues
- How can we measure success?

The following resources were used to inform discussions:

- People Matters Employee Survey 2021 results
- DCJ Workers compensation data
- Employee exit surveys FY21/22
- Learnings from the Cultural Development Learning Strategy

Objectives

DCJ Senior Leadership take an active approach to eliminate racism across the department by:

- Modelling anti-racist behaviour and leading cultural change across DCJ
- Establishing a process to deal with racism efficiently, thoughtfully and thoroughly when it arises
- Developing a culture and workplace environment where staff have confidence that racism will be addressed effectively
- Ensuring systemic and structural racism is eliminated across internal policies, processes and decision making tools.

What we heard

- Racism is a significant problem in DCJ.
- There is a lack of cultural sensitivity when addressing and dealing with racism.
- The Department does not know how to address racism in the workplace.
- There is no clear policy or operational direction to tackle racism.
- Inadequate data collection (relating to culture, cultural safety, racism and/or discrimination) results in the inability to make informed policy decision on how to address the issue or quantify its extent.
- Staff from CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background experience significant barriers to career progression, based on systemic racism.
- Staff have experienced complacency, indifference and unconscious bias from leaders when raising racism in the workplace.
- Staff don't report racism in the workplace due to the historic lack of support made available.

Proposal

Focus	Leadership	Policy and procedural reform	Supporting staff experiencing racism	Building an anti-racist DCJ
How can we address racism in DCJ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretary and DCJ Executive Leadership Team (ELT) acknowledge racism and individually commit to developing an anti-racist organisation. Implement a long-term anti-racist communication strategy for DCJ led by the Secretary & ELT that includes regular communication to each Division on racism and progress tackling racism. The ELT hold Executives in charge accountable for developing and implementing actions to tackle racism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a stand-alone anti-racism policy for DCJ that defines racism, sets standards for behaviour and a clear regime of responses to racist behaviour. Develop a new management process to deal with complaints of racism with accountable time frames and quality standards for managing complaints of racism with a quarterly report to the ELT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a truth telling process to allow staff to convey racist experiences working at DCJ in a safe and supportive environment with access to relevant and appropriate supports. Provide a system of culturally safe supports to staff, especially those experiencing racism and proactive assistance to those disclosing racism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proactive plans of management for Divisions with the highest reported racist experiences, which will be reported to and tracked by the ELT. Develop and conduct Anti-racist training for all DCJ staff. Introduce specific anti-racist resources for all staff on induction. Design processes for recruitment that eliminate structural racism and address bias in decision making and proactively test for bias in recruitment. Set internal targets to proactively recruit for a more diverse senior executive cohort across DCJ.
What will this achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear and strong direction for DCJ on racism. A focused effort on driving racism out of DCJ and thoroughly supporting those who experience it. A high level focus on delivering the elements of this strategy to ensure they get done and are effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear unambiguous policy for the entire organisation on what racism is, expected behaviours and responses to it. An accountable and measurable system of responses to racist behaviour. Clear set of management accountabilities in responding to racism in the workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a safe and supported environment for staff to discuss racist experiences and have confidence they will be dealt with thoroughly and responsively. For DCJ to learn from the experiences of its staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong management focus on driving out racist behaviour. A clear understanding for all existing and new staff on DCJ's stance on racism and expected behaviour. A recruitment process that allows fully diverse recruitment and removes bias from the selection process. Executive leadership that reflects the community we serve.
How can we measure this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced racist experiences in hotspot areas. The delivery of all components of the strategy. Improves PMES results and workplace measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved PMES results and verbatim responses. Racist incidents are managed according to the time and quality standards of the policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced experiences of racism across DCJ. Increased satisfaction with the management of grievances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An understanding of, and compliance with, the anti-racism policy.