
NSW Secretaries Board

Anti-Racism Leadership Statement

We acknowledge that today marks the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

As leaders of the NSW public sector, we stand against racism in our workplaces. Racial discrimination is unlawful and is not tolerated in the NSW public sector. Unfortunately, our People Matter Employee Survey results on experiences of racism are deeply concerning and show a problem we must address.

Over the past three years, reports of experiencing racism have increased, reaching 5% in 2023. This is impacting approximately 10,500 of our colleagues, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse colleagues disproportionately affected. In 2023, 17% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents and 8% of respondents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds reported experiences of racism.

Racism, whether it's discrimination, racist jokes, stereotypes or negative attitudes, has no place in our workplaces and will not be tolerated.

We need to do more to prevent and respond to racism, both interpersonal and systemic. This includes open and honest conversations and the bravery to call out racism. If you see racism, say something. Silence perpetuates racism, while a speak up culture strengthens respect and safety.

If you experience racism, we stand with you and encourage you to come forward. We know that it can be challenging to report racism, but as leaders we commit to ensuring that complaints are treated seriously and handled with sensitivity, fairness and confidentiality. We will work to strengthen awareness of what is acceptable and how to respond to racism.

Anti-racism challenges us to look deeper at the attitudes we hold. We all have bias, often unconscious, that impacts how we view and interact with others who might be different from us. The systems we work in can reinforce these views and create an unequal playing field. Being an anti-racist public sector means we look hard at the rules of the game and how they are applied to make sure we give people an equitable chance.

We will work towards an anti-racist NSW public sector and in doing so, improve the experience of our employees and customers. No one can do their best work when they are in fear of racism. Our commitment to anti-racism will allow staff to bring their most authentic and best self to work and in turn, provide the best service to the people of NSW.

As we continue to drive fairness, respect and equity in our workforce, we will see a reflection of this in the outcomes we achieve for NSW.