

***June 26, 2009***

***Media Statement***

---

## **Report on Perth racism reflects numbers of complaints received by Commission**

WA Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson says a national survey that found Perth shows greater prejudice against minority groups than other Australians, reflects figures showing that in eight of the past ten years race discrimination has been the number one complaint received by the Commission.

The 'Challenging Racism Project' by the University of Western Sydney and Macquarie University surveyed more than 16,000 Australians over seven years and found that more than 14 per cent of Perth people said they were prejudiced against other cultures, compared with a national average of about 12 per cent.

The study did find, however, that the overwhelming majority of Australians, including Perth residents, believed cultural diversity was good for the nation.

Commissioner Henderson said last year WA was only slightly behind the Northern Territory and New South Wales in terms of the rates of race discrimination complaints received by equal opportunity agencies.

Northern Territory and Perth people were also the most likely to report discrimination based on their race in the workplace, shops and restaurants, the survey showed.

“This year the Commission has already received nearly 100 complaints on the ground of race mainly in the area of employment but also a significant number in the provision of goods and services,” Ms Henderson said.

The Commissioner said she hoped State Parliament would urgently amend Part III of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, which deals with discrimination on the ground of race. The Bill inserts a new division into part III entitled 'Racially Offensive Behaviour.'

“Racially offensive behaviour is any public act that is reasonably likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person on the basis of their race.

“The Commission continues to receive reports of racially offensive behaviour which it is currently unable to investigate and this Bill would be a positive step towards protecting all members of Western Australia’s diverse ethnic, cultural and racial community.”

**FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT: Commissioner Yvonne Henderson  
(08) 9216 3954 or mobile number 0409 880 544**

Level 2, 141 St Georges Terrace, Western Australia 6000 - Tel: (08) 9216 3900 - Fax: (08) 9216 3960  
Email: [eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au](mailto:eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au) Website [www.eoc.wa.gov.au](http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au)

G O V E R N M E N T O F W E S T E R N  
A U S T R A L I A