# Cultural diversity and anti-racism at Victoria Legal Aid

## Our plan of action — updated January 2022

1. Individual Impact: Reduction of racism.
   1. Clearly and consistently communicate VLA’s commitment to addressing racism experienced by staff and clients across multiple channels and in the Justice Sector more broadly
   2. Implement more effective and accessible complaints and reporting systems, **i**ncluding anonymous reporting, to capture:
      * + staff experience of racism directed towards themselves as employees
        + incidence and impact of witnessing court-based interactions directed towards clients which are experienced as racist.

Monitor and review data to provide regular reporting and ensure disclosing environment is safe.

* 1. Implement systems to safeguard psychological and cultural safetyof staff when making racism-based reports, including targeted training for managers in responding to reports, training for contact officers and ensuring the employee assistance program is providing culturally sensitive support offerings.

1. System/structural reduction of racism.
   1. Review and refine Strategy 26 to incorporate an additional value of Inclusion. Ensure VLA adopts a proactive stance and takes a safety approach for clients that includes a specific lens of anti-racism.
   2. Develop a baseline data set to enhance our analytic capabilityto better understand the data we currently hold, determine gaps (staff and clients) and review systems that retain and house data.
   3. Review recruitment and career extension processes to promote our values, with the aim of increasingly attracting, developing, and retaining staff from diverse backgrounds including people of colour.
   4. Continue and enhance using our platform to combat structural racism in the justice sector by focusing on key racial justice advocacy issues that are linked to VLA’s core work and our strategic advocacy priorities which include promotion of reforms that:

* address the over-criminalisation of First Nations people and their disproportionate representation in the youth justice and child protection systems, working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations; and
* address the experiences of over-criminalisation and disproportionate involvement in the youth justice and child protection systems of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, working with culturally and linguistically diverse organisations and communities.
  1. Strengthen and prioritise identified relationships with culturally diverse and/or racial justice organisations and leverage our platform to amplify the voices of these organisations.

1. Integrated and agile learning on racism
   1. Audit and refresh anti-racism training resources to equip staff with the knowledge, skills and tools required to be anti-racist, including topics such as historical contexts for racism, microaggressions, privilege and bystander intervention.
   2. Design and deliver refreshed recruitment-based training for managers and make training available to panel members to address unconscious bias, merit-based decision making as well as organisational ‘fit’ with reference to the value of Inclusion.
   3. The Executive Management Group, Senior Leadership Team and VLA Board to continue and enhance racial justice learning with focus on ongoing and peer-based reflection to extend senior leadership’s cultural competency on issues of racial justice, cultural diversity and anti-racism. Continue to identify opportunities to support a diverse leadership for senior appointments.
   4. Continue and enhance active consideration around cultural diversity and inclusion issues through the choice of speakers, in decision-making, senior appointments and organisational events.
   5. Continue and enhance valuing the views of VLA’s First Nations Staff Network and Cultural Diversity Consultative Committee (CDCC) in decision-making, consultation or engagement on racial justice and cultural diversity issues.