

**Evaluation report:
Spectator Racism Project
2021–2022**

RACISM.
NOBODY WINS.

SEE IT? HEAR IT? REPORT IT!

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Evaluation report: Spectator Racism Project 2021–2022

June 2023

Australian Human Rights Commission



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

RACISM. IT STOPS WITH ME



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The *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign and the Australian Human Rights Commission acknowledge the traditional custodians of land, sea, waterways and sky throughout Australia and pay respect to First Nations Elders past and present. The Commission also acknowledges the ongoing work of Australia's First Peoples in anti-racism since colonisation.

Project overview

In early 2021, various incidents of spectator racism re-ignited national conversations about racism in Australian sports. This prompted the Race Discrimination Commissioner and others to consider what could be done to address this ongoing issue.

From January to March 2021, the Commission conducted a preliminary review of Australian sporting codes and professional sporting venues and their response to racism and racial discrimination. The review found that there was no uniform approach to incidents of spectator racism. While each of the major sporting codes had policies that prohibit racism and racial discrimination, many lacked clear guidelines on how these incidents should be dealt with, or did not directly include spectators within the scope of their policies. Venues (such as stadiums) were also found to have varying levels of infrastructure in place to support the prevention and response to incidents of spectator racism. Simultaneously, events such as the launch of the report, *Do Better – Independent review into Collingwood Football Club's responses to incidents of racism and cultural safety in the workplace* by Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt and Professor Lindon Coombes highlighted the need to address racism in a way that is proactive and grounded in an understanding of structural racism.

In response to these issues, the Australian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) convened a roundtable of representatives from across the Australian sporting sector, and anti-racism experts, to discuss opportunities to work together and potential ways forward.

Held on 27 April 2021, the roundtable included a discussion of the need for a set of guidelines to promote a coordinated approach to spectator racism in sports. Over subsequent months, the Commission led a working group in the drafting of these guidelines, which were released by the Commission and over 20 partner organisations in November 2021.

The 2021 [Guide to Addressing Spectator Racism in Sport](#) (the Guidelines) are intended to promote best practice responses to spectator racism at the professional level. They identify actions that can be taken consistently across sporting codes to ensure that spectators, officials, and players are safe and aware of how to respond to incidents of spectator racism. The Guidelines also propose proactive measures to prevent racism from occurring via a commitment to anti-racist practice. The Guidelines are intended to be broad enough to facilitate their adaptation by each sporting code, while maintaining a level of consistency across the sporting sector.

To accompany the release of the Guidelines, the Commission developed a [suite of resources](#) to support their implementation. These include templates, guides, and additional resources to promote best practice in identifying, preventing, and responding to racism at the interpersonal and institutional level. The resources advocate for an understanding of racism as systemic, as well as commitments to better practice across organisations and the sporting sector. Among other things, these resources advocate for an understanding and approach to racism that is trauma-informed, culturally safe, and guided by the expertise of those from First Nations and other negatively racialised communities.

This project is one part of an important conversation about racism in sports. The Commission hopes this conversation will be an iterative one, and intends to continue this work with diverse stakeholders including players, players associations, sporting peak bodies, venues, clubs, and codes. Additional recommendations for next steps are provided in section four.

Evaluation approach

Following the launch of a refreshed *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign in July 2022, the Commission developed an evaluation strategy. This included two distinct yet overlapping phases: an initial phase that sought to evaluate the extent to which campaign initiatives had met immediate and intermediate outcomes, and a second phase, to be undertaken throughout 2023, that will involve ongoing consultations to evaluate the extent to which campaign initiatives align with longer-term goals. In November 2022, as part of the initial phase, the Commission circulated four surveys. These included:

- (1) A survey sent to *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign supporters
- (2) A survey sent to users of the Workplace Cultural Diversity Tool
- (3) A survey sent to individuals and organisations who participated in consultations regarding the campaign
- (4) A survey sent to individuals and organisations who had signed on in support of the Spectator Racism Guidelines.

Consisting of 14 questions, the fourth survey sought to understand the utility and efficacy of the Guidelines and supporting resources, barriers to their implementation, and potential next steps for the project, from the perspective of those organisations that had signed on in support of the Guidelines.

Developed via the survey software [Qualtrics](#), the survey was circulated to endorsing organisations via email, with participants provided an anonymous link to submit their feedback. Through a mix of question styles and content, the survey gathered both qualitative and quantitative data. It is important to note that both this distribution method and the decision to only engage existing supporters of the project places considerable limitations on the quality, depth, and diversity of survey feedback. However, survey data does provide useful insights into the utility and efficacy of the Guidelines and supporting resources. In future, the Commission should prioritise the establishment of robust Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks that also seek to understand the perspective of target audiences, prospective target audiences, and other relevant stakeholders.

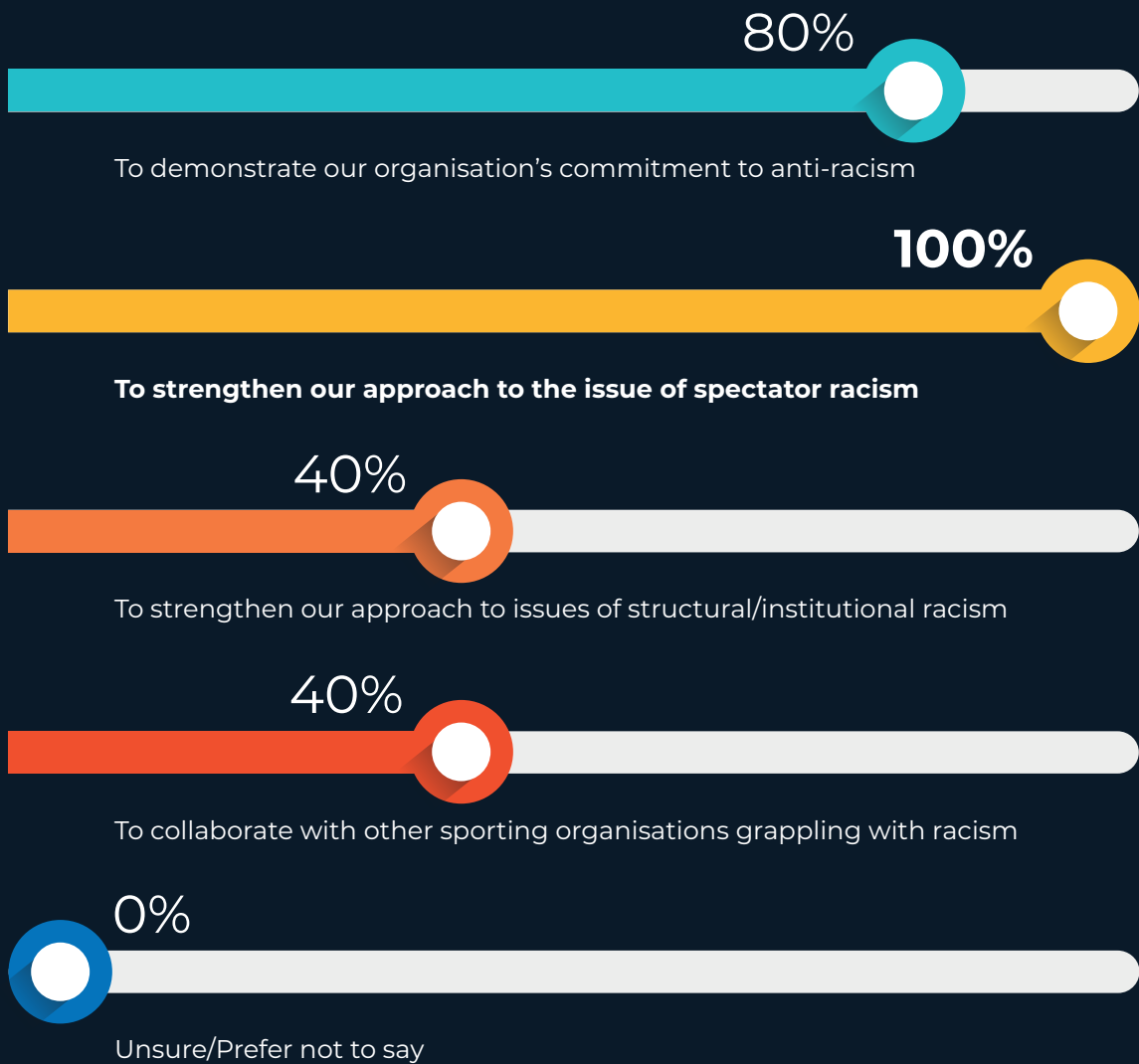
What we learned

3.1 Evaluation survey

The survey collected a total of 12 responses, representing approximately 50 percent of supporting organisations. However, most questions were answered by a smaller number (approximately five) respondents.

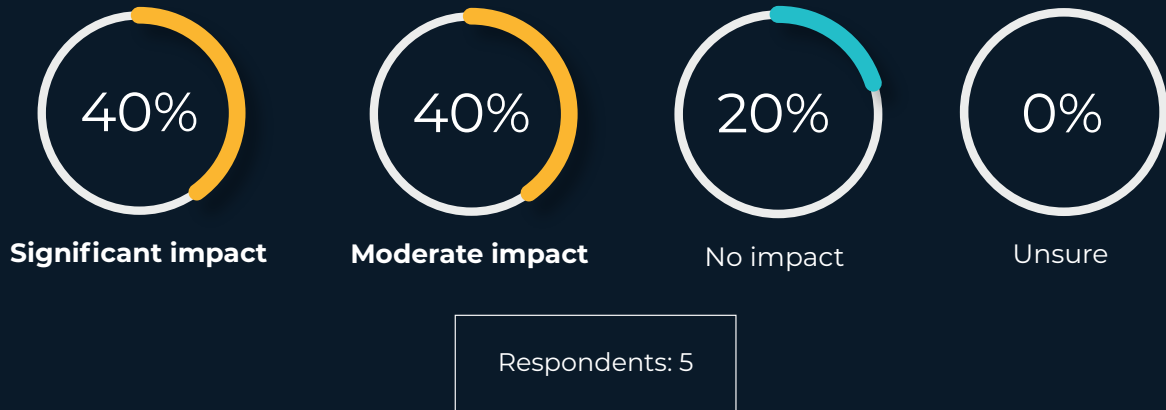
Key findings included:

When asked why their organisation signed up in support of the Guidelines (selecting all that apply):



Respondents: 5

When asked to describe the impact of the Guidelines on their organisation's approach to racism and racial discrimination to date:



When asked to describe their organisation's relationship to each of the 13 steps provided in the Guidelines:



When asked, if their organisation has not yet implemented the 13 steps included in the Guidelines, what has prevented this:

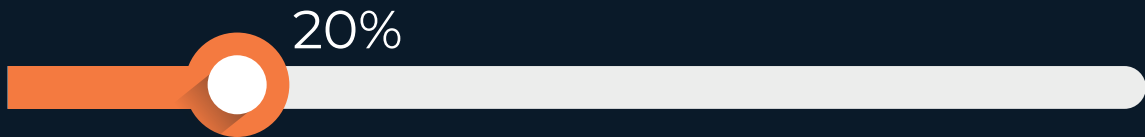


Our organisation is working towards implementing all of the 13 steps



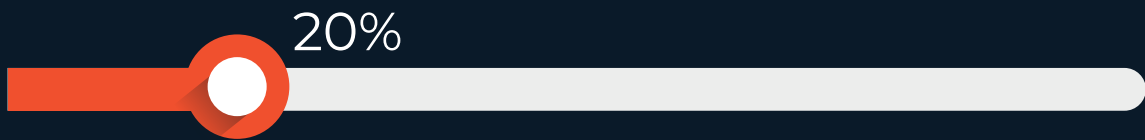
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Our organisation lacks the necessary resources to implement all of the 13 steps



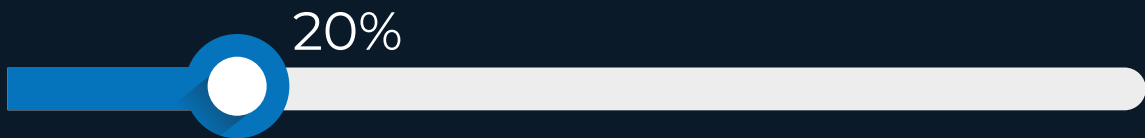
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Our organisation lacks the necessary knowledge to implement all of the 13 steps



20%

Some or all of the 13 steps are not relevant to our organisation

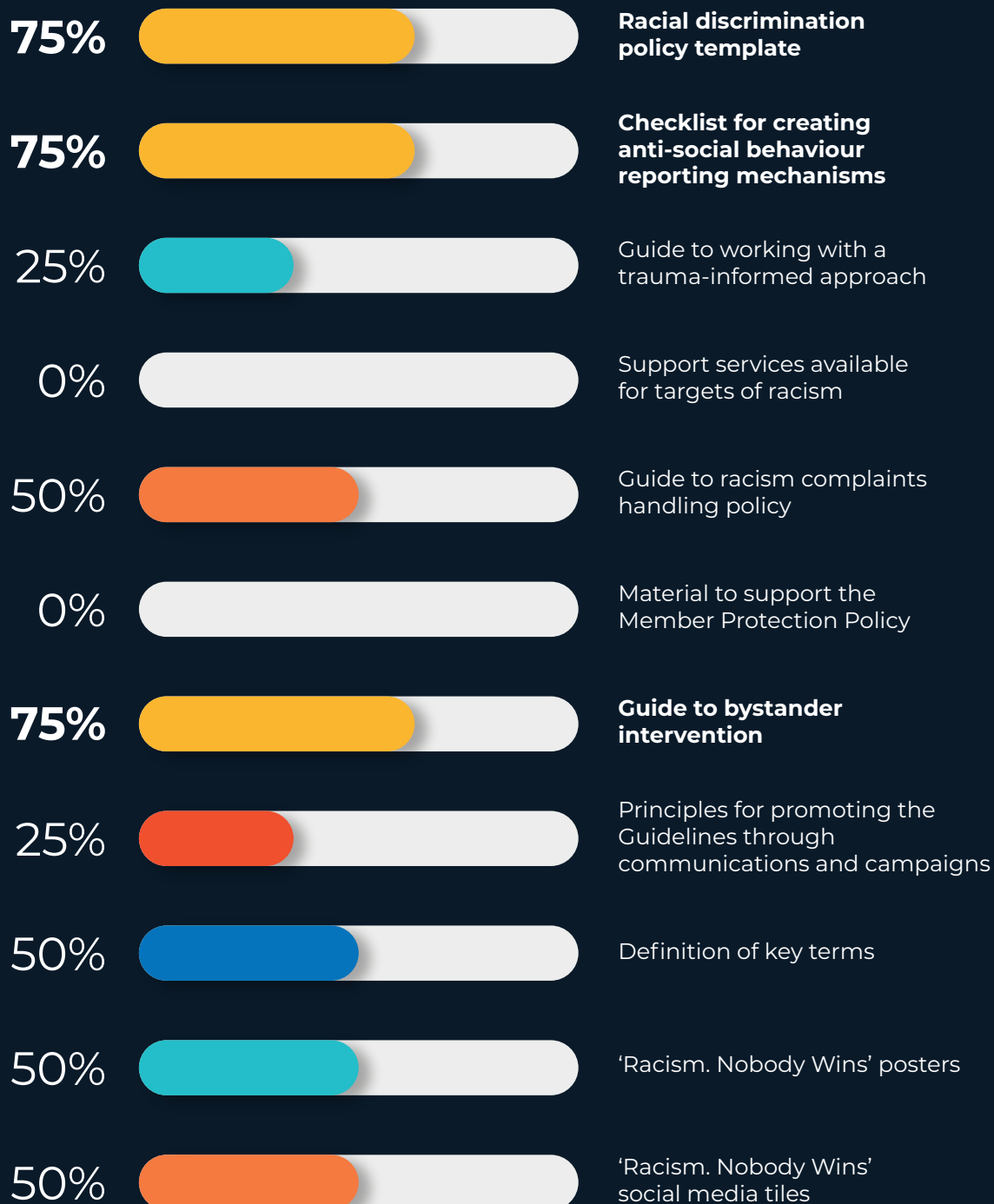


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There are too many competing priorities for our organisation to focus on this work at this time

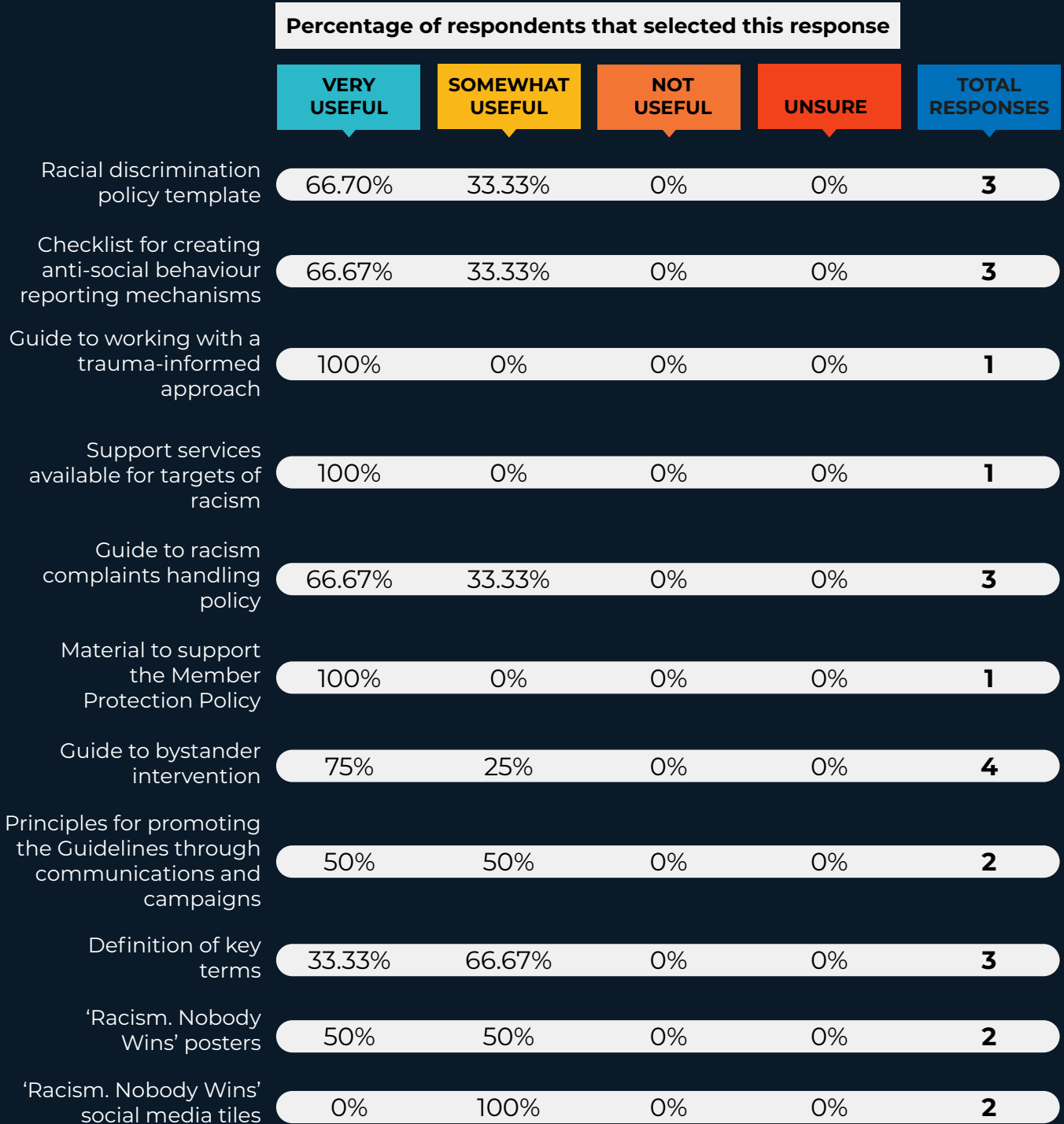
Respondents: 5

When asked if they, or anyone in their organisation, had accessed any of the following supporting resources created to accompany the Guidelines (selecting all that apply):



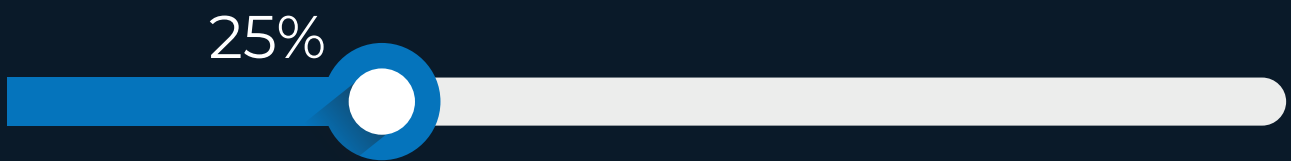
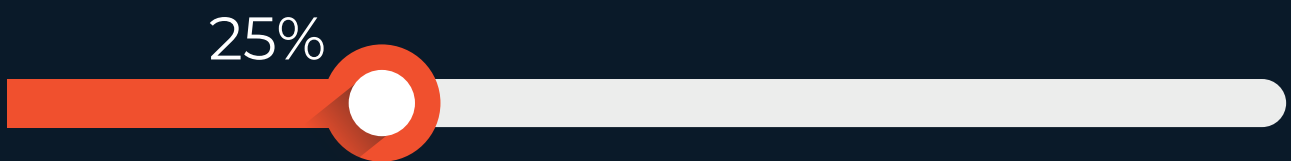
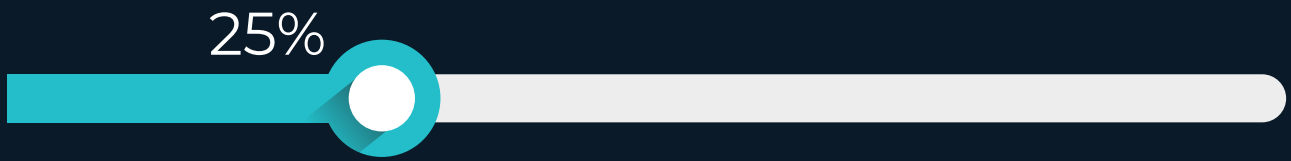
Respondents: 4

When asked how useful they found each of the following supporting resources for promoting better practice within their organisation (rating only those resources that had been accessed by someone in the organisation):



Respondents: 3

When asked what kinds of resources would be most useful to them as they engage in anti-racism within their organisation or facility (selecting all that apply):



Respondents: 4

3.2 Other

In September 2022, the Guidelines and supporting resources were awarded a silver medal at the Sydney Design Awards in the category of 'Better Future – Equity and Inclusion'.

In November 2022, the Guidelines and supporting resources were awarded Bronze at the Transform Awards ANZ 2022 in the category of 'Best Visual Identity by Charity, NGO or NFP'.

Finally, in 2023, [the project won Gold in the Better Futures – Equity and Inclusion category of the 2023 Australian Design Awards.](#)

The project's evaluation also included an analysis of media reach, the consultation and drafting process, and web analytics for the project page. For more information on this evaluation, please contact the Race Discrimination Team: antiracismsecretariat@humanrights.gov.au.

Recommendations and next steps

While the Spectator Racism project has so far enjoyed relative success and recognition, ongoing incidents demonstrate that more must be done to address the issue of spectator racism in sports, and to situate this within a broader approach to addressing racism at the institutional and systemic level.

1

That the Commission work in partnership with national sporting organisations to ensure that sporting codes and clubs are adequately supported and provided with the necessary tools to implement the Guidelines and support those who have experienced racism.

3

That the project be expanded to strengthen the situation of conversations around spectator racism within broader conversations and comprehensive strategies to address racism at the institutional and systemic level. This should include policies to build racial literacy and dismantle structural racism within sporting organisations and adjacent sectors, to prevent racism online, and to recognise the systemic nature of racism and enact strategies to address this.

2

That the project be expanded to strengthen the involvement of diverse actors, including players and players associations, as well as sporting and community organisations. That, at all times, the project should work to centre the perspectives and experiences of those from negatively racialised communities, including First Nations peoples, and should work in partnership with local and national organisations to ensure that resources and strategies developed are both consistent and adaptable for local settings.

4

That the project be expanded to include a focus on spectator racism in community sports. This might include the adaptation of the Guidelines and supporting resources for a community sporting setting, drawing on principles of co-design to centre the needs, experiences, and expertise of communities in developing this work.

Based on insights gained throughout the roundtable, drafting process, launch and evaluation, the Commission recommends four areas of development for this project:

Further Information

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