

2026

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks
Assembly Resolution of 17 September 2025 - Government Response**

**Presented by
Michael Pettersson MLA
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
May 2026**

Page intentionally left blank.

Multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks - Assembly Resolution of 17 September 2025 - Government Response

April 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

The Health and Community Services Directorate acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

We respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and their continuing culture and contribution they make to the Canberra region and the life of our city.

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2026

Material in this publication may be reproduced provided due acknowledgement is made.

Produced by the Health and Community Services Directorate. Enquiries about this publication should be directed to the Health and Community Services Directorate.

GPO Box 158, Canberra City 2601

act.gov.au

Telephone: Access Canberra – 13 22 81

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, and need the telephone typewriter (TTY) service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for 13 22 81.

For speak and listen users, please phone 1300 555 727.

For more information on these services, contact us through the National Relay Service:

www.accesshub.gov.au.

If English is not your first language and you require a translating and interpreting service, please telephone Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

Contents

Purpose	4
Background.....	4
Multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks motion.....	4
Inquiry into racial vilification	5
Government actions to prevent racism and discrimination	6
Government commitment to multiculturalism and strengthening anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks	6
Preventing and countering violent extremism in the ACT	7
Strengthening Legal Protections Against Racial Vilification	7
ACT Government update on the 2023 inquiry into racial vilification	10
Future directions	18
Appendix 1. Status of recommendations from the 2023 Inquiry into Racial Vilification	20

Purpose

This paper provides the ACT Government response to the Assembly Resolution of 17 September 2025 on multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks by providing:

1. An overview of the government's actions and approaches to supporting multiculturalism, preventing racism and discrimination as well as countering violent extremism, and
2. An update on developments since the government tabled its response to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion's Inquiry into Racial Vilification in March 2023.
3. Future directions by government to continue strengthening multiculturalism, anti-racism, and anti-discrimination frameworks in the ACT.

Background

Multiculturalism, anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks motion

In September 2025, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs presented a motion to the ACT Legislative Assembly to strengthen multiculturalism, anti-racism, and anti-discrimination frameworks.

The motion was presented noting the anti-immigration rallies held in Canberra and across Australia in August 2025, and the promotion of messages of racism, discrimination, Islamophobia and antisemitism.

The motion was passed and the ACT Legislative Assembly agreed to:

- The ACT Government continue working with the Commonwealth Government to strengthen anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks.
- All members of the Legislative Assembly to publicly-re-affirm their support of Canberra's multicultural community and condemn the anti-immigration sentiment expressed in the rallies held in Canberra on 31 August 2025.
- The Minister for Multicultural Affairs to provide an update to the Assembly by May 2026 on progress made against recommendations of the racial vilification inquiry of the Tenth Assembly, since its response to that inquiry was provided in March 2023.

Inquiry into racial vilification

The Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion tabled its *Inquiry into Racial Vilification* in November 2022. In March 2023, the government issued its formal response, reaffirming that racism and racial vilification have no place in the Territory and identifying a range of measures the government would pursue within the scope of the ACT's human rights and legislative frameworks. These protections are anchored in the *Human Rights Act 2004*, the *Discrimination Act 1991*, and the *Criminal Code 2002*, which together provide civil and criminal responses to racial vilification.

Not all Inquiry recommendations were agreed at the time, and some have since been addressed or overtaken by broader legal and policy reforms. Given the time lapsed since the Inquiry, the policy and legislative context has continued to evolve.

Of the 16 recommendations considered in 2023, five were agreed, six agreed in principle, two noted as existing policy, and three noted. This update reports progress against the agreed recommendations and outlines how subsequent reforms have addressed the intent of those agreed in principle.

1. Government actions to prevent racism and discrimination

The government is committed to a multiculturally inclusive city, where everyone feels safe, free from discrimination and has a sense of belonging in the ACT. The government's actions and approaches to supporting multiculturalism, preventing racism and discrimination as well as countering violent extremism are outlined below.

Government commitment to multiculturalism and strengthening anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks

The government strongly supports multiculturalism and values the contribution of cultural diversity to the ACT community. It is committed to an inclusive society and to Canberra's status as an Advanced Welcoming City and Refugee Welcome Zone. This commitment is underpinned by the *Multiculturalism Act 2023*, the Charter for Multiculturalism, and the Ministerial Advisory Council for Multiculturalism, which ensure multicultural voices inform government policy and decision-making.

The government supports social cohesion through inclusive policies and the delivery of events that bring people together across faith, gender, cultural background and race. Flagship initiatives such as the National Multicultural Festival provide a nationally recognised platform for celebrating diversity and community connection, showcasing the ACT's commitment to inclusion in a way unmatched by other jurisdictions. In addition, events such as Ramadan community dinners and Diwali celebrations bring communities together to share culture and build mutual understanding, demonstrating the strong social cohesion and support for multiculturalism that underpins life in the ACT.

The government does not accept racism, discrimination, hate speech, hate symbols or violence. While reported incidents in the ACT are relatively low, they do occur.

Strong legal protections also exist under Commonwealth and ACT law, including the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and the *Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)*. The government continues to work with the Commonwealth, other jurisdictions, and communities to strengthen anti-racism and anti-discrimination frameworks.

The government has taken concrete action to protect communities and prevent harm, including:

- In 2023, the government introduced new legislation - the *Multiculturalism Act 2023*, committing government to provide stronger support for multiculturalism and inclusion, as well as to protect all communities across cultures and religions.

- In 2023, the government passed the *Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 2022* which prohibits the display of Nazi symbols.
- In 2024, the government amended its *Discrimination Act 1991* to strengthen protections against discrimination and promote equality. The introduction of a positive duty will require individuals and organisations to take further steps to prevent discrimination.
- In 2026, the government committed to further reform to strengthen these laws and will review the ACT's current hate crime and anti-vilification laws.

The government embraces diversity and affirms that everyone has the right to feel safe, regardless of their religious, ethnic, or cultural background.

Preventing and countering violent extremism in the ACT

The government's approach to countering violent extremism focuses on supporting people vulnerable to radicalisation, manipulation, and disinformation, including young people, as set out in the *ACT Countering Violent Extremism Strategy 2023–26* (ACT CVE Strategy). Violent extremism involves the use or support of unlawful violence to advance ideological, political, or social goals and does not include peaceful protest or non-violent views.

Radicalisation often comes from a person's unmet needs in relation to things like their ability to cope, to form strong and appropriate social relations, and to be confident in their identity and sense of self.

The ACT CVE Strategy guides a whole-of-government approach aligned with national best practice. The ACT Support and Intervention Program (ACTSIP) is the primary mechanism for intervention, using a person-centred case management model to build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities. The ACTSIP and associated work is funded by the Commonwealth Government and delivered in line with the Australian Government's *Safer Australia Australian Counter – Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy 2025*. The government is considering a refresh of the strategic approach to CVE to ensure the ACT remains prepared to countering violent extremism.

Strengthening legal protections against racial vilification

The 2023 government response confirmed that work was underway to strengthen the *Discrimination Act 1991* through the *Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022*, including:

- Expanding the Discrimination Act's coverage
- Introducing a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, vilification and sexual harassment before it occurs which came into effect for the government in April 2025 and for the rest of the community from April 2027.

These reforms have since been embedded across government service delivery and policy administration.

The government also committed to considering options to strengthen penalties for serious vilification, noting that serious vilification on the basis of race and religion is already a criminal

offence under the *ACT Criminal Code 2002*. This work continues as part of broader justice policy reforms.

Since 2023, community expectations and national policy settings relating to hate speech have evolved. Public reporting and national developments have highlighted:

- Increased community concern about online and targeted hate speech
- Higher reporting of racial discrimination and vilification, and
- The need for alignment with national anti-racism initiatives.

In response to these, the government is examining whether the ACT's civil and criminal vilification provisions remain fit for purpose, including:

- Thresholds for serious vilification offences
- Accessibility of civil vilification pathways, and
- Opportunities to strengthen victim support.

Positive duty to eliminate discrimination

The government has introduced into the Discrimination Act a positive duty to eliminate discrimination and vilification. The positive duty requires any organisation or business, and any individual with organisational management responsibility that is subject to the Discrimination Act, to take reasonable and proportionate steps to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and unlawful vilification.

The positive duty applies to all protected attributes in the Discrimination Act, including race, nationality, colour, religion, and immigrant status. The duty commenced for ACT Government entities in April 2025 and will commence for all other people and entities who are duty holders under the Discrimination Act from April 2027.

Hate crimes and vilification review

Progressing hate crime and laws that protect against antisemitism has been a longstanding commitment of the government. Prior to the 2024 commitment to review the territory laws, the government has actively participated in national conversations on responses to hate crime and laws that protect against antisemitism.

In 2024, the government committed to review and strengthen the territory laws regulating hate crimes and vilification, to protect the community from crimes motivated by prejudice, hatred and extremism.

On 21 January 2025 National Cabinet agreed that Commonwealth, State and Territory Attorneys-General would work together to ensure best practice is shared across jurisdictions. This work is being undertaken through the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG). The government also committed to collaborate in the establishment of a national database to track antisemitic crime, incidents and behaviours. The national hate crimes and incidents database will be overseen by the Police Ministers' Council. This work is expected to also cover hate crime more broadly, not just religiously or racially motivated offences.

In January 2026, the Chief Minister committed to prioritising the review of the territory laws to better address hate crime and vilification, including anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and abuse directed at LGBTIQ+ people. The review will be informed through a consultation process and aim to identify further opportunities to protect our communities from the harms caused by hate and prejudice.

The consultation process will include targeted stakeholder engagement and a submission process to collect community views, experiences and preferred approaches for legislative reform. The stakeholder consultation process commenced at the end of February 2026. The review is scheduled to be finalised by Spring 2026 with legislative reforms to be brought forward by government in 2026. The final report will provide recommendations for potential legislative reform and inform a Bill for introduction.

Royal Commission on antisemitism and social cohesion

On 14 December 2025, a terror attack on Jewish Australians took place at Bondi Beach in Sydney that resulted in the loss of 15 lives and injury of a further 40 people. There has been a national movement to reassess the effectiveness of current hate crime laws, and a Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion was established.

The Commonwealth is working closely across jurisdictions to ensure a coordinated national response. The Commonwealth has publicly stated that all States and Territories will be asked to join the Commission, ensuring that it operates as a genuinely national inquiry with consistent powers and comprehensive cooperation across jurisdictions.

The terms of reference of the Commission set out key areas of work including tackling antisemitism and making recommendations that would contribute to strengthening social cohesion. Intersecting work with these areas includes:

- The Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism is built on 13 focus areas that outline a roadmap to for confronting Antisemitism in Australia. Each focus area is defined by its objective and key actions to achieve it. The Plan has been fully adopted by the Australian Government.
- The National Anti-Racism Framework: A roadmap to eliminating racism in Australia is a roadmap for governments, non-government organisations, businesses, and civil society organisation to take anti-racist action across sectors. It set 63 recommendations which are a call to action for reform Australia's systems and structures, including in the justice and legal system, health, education, workplaces, media and the arts, and data.

The Commission is now progressing through its evidence-gathering, consultation, and public engagement phases and is required to deliver its interim report by 30 April 2026 and final report by 14 December 2026. These reports will guide next steps and actions to strengthen social cohesion, improve responses to antisemitism, and enhance national strategies against ideologically and religiously motivated extremism.

Islamophobia and anti-Muslim discrimination

The government recognises that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim discrimination pose serious and interconnected challenges to social cohesion and community safety in Australia. In this context, the Commonwealth established a Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia to provide leadership, coordinate national efforts and advise governments on effective responses to anti-Muslim hate and discrimination. The work of the Special Envoy, including engagement with Muslim communities and faith leaders, complements the broader objectives of the Royal Commission by addressing ideologically and religiously motivated hatred in all its forms. This work aligns with the National Anti-Racism Framework and supports a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to strengthening social cohesion, preventing harm and ensuring all communities can live free from discrimination and fear.

2. ACT Government update on the 2023 inquiry into racial vilification

The Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion tabled its *Inquiry into Racial Vilification* in November 2022, which outlined 16 recommendations for government consideration.

In March 2023, the government issued its response to the inquiry. Of the 16 recommendations, five were agreed, six agreed in principle, two noted as existing policy, and three noted.

The government has continued to advance its work since 2023 to strengthen protections against racial vilification, enhance reporting pathways, support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, and embed anti-racism principles across government services. While several recommendations have been fully delivered, others have been overtaken by broader and more contemporary reforms that now provide stronger, more effective safeguards for the ACT community.

An update on government progress against the **five agreed recommendations** and how subsequent reforms have addressed the intent of the **six agreed in principle** is outlined below.

Agreed recommendations

The government agreed to the following five recommendations of the 2023 inquiry.

Rec. No.	Agreed recommendation
2	The ACT Government focus on promoting anti-racism in places where the ACT Government provides services.
7	The ACT Government prioritise funding to organisations controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the provision of relevant services.
8	The ACT Government, as a matter of priority, assist in the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisation.
11	The ACT Human Rights Commission review the functionality of the online reporting tool to ensure that it is accessible for people who speak languages other than English, the interface is intuitive and easy to navigate, and data collection is optimised.
16	The ACT Government encourage ACT public schools to promote the social media accounts of the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner to ACT public school students.

Recommendation 2: The ACT Government focus on promoting anti-racism in places where the ACT Government provides services

Progress since 2023

The 2023 response noted that anti-racism measures were already in place across government services. Since then:

- Amendments to the *Discrimination Act 1991* that create a positive duty to eliminate discrimination have commenced. These amendments require any organisation or business, and any individual with organisational management responsibility that is subject to the Discrimination Act, to take reasonable and proportionate steps to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and unlawful vilification.
- The *Multiculturalism Act 2023* has introduced annual reporting obligations for government directorates and the Ministerial Advisory Council for Multiculturalism
- Government directorates have strengthened cultural safety practices and improved service accessibility.

Status

- Completed and ongoing: anti-racism practices are now embedded in core government operations as outlined below.

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 - Phase 3 - ACT Closing the Gap Implementation Plan

The Government acknowledges the enduring impacts of discrimination and systemic racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including within government systems and institutions. These inequities are the result of historic and ongoing exclusion and bias, and they continue to affect access to services, health outcomes and safety and trust in public institutions. Addressing racism in all its forms remains a key responsibility of government and is central to achieving genuine equity, self-determination and improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT.

The ACT Government is progressing a range of concrete actions to address systemic racism, including through agreed commitments under Phase 3 of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement. This includes Priority Action 24, strengthening cultural integrity and eliminating racism within the Health and Community Services Directorate; Priority Action 25, embedding cultural capability and cultural safety across the ACT Public Service; and Priority Action 26, undertaking data analysis to identify racial profiling, conscious and unconscious bias, and institutionalised and systemic racism. Together, these actions demonstrate clear alignment with Recommendation 2 of the Inquiry and reflect the Government's ongoing commitment to practical, measurable reform grounded in accountability and partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Embedded mandatory 'Closing the Gap Principle' key performance indicators

The ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to legislate commitments under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, embedding these obligations directly into public sector law. The legislation responds to findings from the Productivity Commission's 2024 Review, which reported that governments had not fulfilled their Closing the Gap commitments and required structural accountability measures.

The *Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* amended the *Public Sector Management Act 1994 (the Act)* and the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*, with commencement scheduled for 1 July 2026.

The passing of this bill means from 1 July 2026 all Senior Executive Service (SES) and statutory office holders by law, must uphold a “Closing the Gap principle” in their work, including embedding cultural capability and addressing systemic and institutional racism. SES and statutory offices must do their jobs in accordance with:

- Demonstrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability
- Working to develop the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability of the administrative unit in which the public servant is employed
- Implementing the principles of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, to the extent they relate to the public servant’s job and the administrative unit in which the public servant is employed
- Promote cultural safety (within the meaning of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Work to eliminate institutional racism in the administrative unit in which the public servant is employed.

To support directorates to implement the legislation, the Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate are developing educational materials and facilitating a series of workshops with Directors-General and Deputy Directors-General.

To further support SES, implementation will also see:

- Updates to SES performance agreements to incorporate Closing the Gap obligations
- Updates to SES Position Descriptions to reflect new wording on capability requirements
- Updates to SES advertisements to reflect relevant Closing the Gap responsibilities, as appropriate
- Advice on annual report directions to ensure clarity on annual statutory reporting requirements

Development of the wearing items of religious significance in school guide

On 29 May 2025, as part of the Education directorate’s commitment to support the implementation measures to promote, include and raise awareness of religious items across ACT public school communities, the directorate launched and published the Wearing Items of Religious Significance (Sikhism) Guidelines (the guidelines). The guidelines were developed in consultation with the ACT Sikh community to support school communities in addressing the religious and cultural needs of Sikh students and their families.

The guidelines recognise that Sikh students must be able to exercise their faith, and schools must support the observance of the five articles of faith and the wearing of headwear by Sikh students.

Multiculturalism in the workplace

Across the ACT Government, directorates are undertaking initiatives to strengthen inclusion, belonging and representation for people from multicultural backgrounds. Over the recent years, multicultural staff networks have been established to support employees from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds across a number of directorates. With growing membership, these networks meet regularly to promote the ACT Public Service as an employer of choice, foster meaningful connections, and strengthen a sense of belonging.

Activities include Harmony Day events, livestreamed discussions, and 'buddy' arrangements to support new starters and work experience participants from multicultural backgrounds to settle into the workplace.

ACT Government directorates are also progressing strategic and practical reforms to embed inclusive practice across the employee lifecycle. This includes the development of Inclusion and Belonging strategies, which reaffirm commitments to safe, supportive and empowering workplaces, as well as updates to recruitment guidance and employee value proposition tools. These initiatives aim to attract, retain and support culturally and linguistically diverse candidates, strengthen cultural capability, and ensure recruitment and employment practices are fair, accessible and inclusive across the ACT Public Service.

ACT Public Service (ACTPS) pilot mentoring program for leaders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

The Cultural Transformation Branch, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, launched a pilot mentoring program for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds who wish to advance their career into the SES.

The aim of the pilot program was to strengthen the capability and capacity of the ACT Public Service by supporting the career goals of people from CALD backgrounds and ultimately encouraging increased SES representation. With people from CALD backgrounds underrepresented at senior leadership levels in the ACTPS compared to other classifications, this pilot program helps to address a clear gap in initiatives that support their progression into leadership and executive roles.

The pilot commenced in June 2025 with 13 pairs of mentees and mentors (26 participants in total) and ran for 6 months, concluding in December 2025. Evaluation of the pilot is now underway.

Recommendation 7: The ACT Government prioritise funding to organisations controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for the provision of relevant services

Progress since 2023

The government agreed to prioritise funding to organisations controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the provision of relevant services, including Aboriginal and Community-Controlled organisations (ACCOS).

In January 2023, the Health and Community Services Directorate established the Aboriginal Service Development branch (ASD). ASD supports and works in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, new and existing ACCOs and government partners to deliver on various aspects of the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-28* and the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector*.

Since its establishment in early 2023, ASD has been working with ACCOs supporting their operational capability and capacity to meet community goals to deliver across the entire human services system. This includes holistic and culturally safe wraparound services, responding to individual ACCOs needs as determined by the individual ACCO and bringing partners together to collaboratively address challenges and explore opportunities.

In addition to supporting ACCOs to obtain relevant registrations, other foundational actions completed include:

- A feasibility study to support ACCO sector development
- Early engagement with Aboriginal community-operated service providers
- Funding secured for an initial suite of diversionary services under *Next Steps for Our Kids 2022–2030*
- Provision of establishment funding to support the development of an emerging ACCO.

Current context (2026)

Increasing investment in the ACT Aboriginal community-controlled sector continues to be a priority of the ACT Government. In the 2024-25 ACT Budget, the government invested \$3.86 million over 4 years to establish and deliver the ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund (AEEF). The AEEF was designed with community as an alternative funding source for local ACCOs to support their growth and sustainability. Feedback has demonstrated the AEEF is accessible and valued, supporting improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Canberra and provides much needed funding to ACCOs in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector.

Fostering more inclusive funding practices and supporting cross-directorate funding approaches remains a key priority for the government, noting new and existing ACCOs continue to face sustainability challenges, including workforce and long-term, flexible outcomes focused funding arrangements.

Status

- Partially progressed: foundational work completed.
- Ongoing: work to support the sustainability of the ACT Aboriginal community-controlled sector is ongoing, including exploring options for a peak-like body or other arrangements for the ACT community-controlled sector.

Contextualised: Prioritising funding to ACCOs is a whole-of-government responsibility and is being considered as part of the newly established Select Policy Subcommittee of Cabinet on Closing the Gap.

Badji – the government’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business support program

Badji is the government’s initiative designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs by providing tailored business assistance and resources to help them grow and thrive. This includes assistance with marketing, referrals, administration, and access to further funding and grant opportunities. By strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, the program contributes to a more inclusive and culturally diverse ACT economy - creating opportunities for cross-cultural engagement and improving outcomes for the wider multicultural community.

Recommendation 8: The ACT Government, as a matter of priority, assist in the establishment of an Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisation

Progress Since 2023

The 2023 response committed the government to assisting in the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organisation. At that time:

- Housing ACT had undertaken consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, tenants and community members
- A dedicated team had been established to support foundational work
- A community participation approach was developed to embed culturally safe co-design principles

Current context (2026)

Safe and secure housing is vital to the wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community. Since establishment, ASD has supported multiple ACCOs to obtain their National Regulatory System for Community Housing registrations. In doing so, progress has been made towards a mixed mode community-controlled approach enhancing housing options and improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Currently, the ACT has 3 ACCOs who are registered community housing providers. The government is investigating opportunities to support these ACCOs to further build their housing stock.

The government encourages self-determination by fostering the growth of ACCOs. In addition to the strategic and practical support offered to new and existing ACCOs, financial support is also available through the AEEF. The AEEF can support new ACCOs to respond to community needs or existing ACCOs who are looking to expand their service delivery capacity and offerings, i.e. exploring the delivery of tenancy and maintenance management services, and home ownership pathways.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-control is an act of self-determination. Determining the need for, or establishment of an ACCO is not a government decision.

Status

- Completed foundational work: consultation and co-design approach.
- Integrated: ongoing work is now embedded within broader housing and community engagement processes, including supporting new and existing ACCOs with aspirations and community led approaches to deliver housing services.

Recommendation 11: The ACT Human Rights Commission review the functionality of the online reporting tool to ensure that it is accessible for people who speak languages other than English, the interface is intuitive and easy to navigate, and data collection is optimised

Progress Since 2023

The 2023 response confirmed that the ACT Human Rights Commission was reviewing its website and reporting tool to improve accessibility.

Since then:

- The Commission has undertaken digital modernisation
- Accessibility, multilingual information and user experience have been improved
- Reporting pathways have been integrated into broader community engagement initiatives.

Status

- Completed / integrated: accessibility improvements incorporated into ongoing digital upgrades.
- Ongoing: continuous enhancement of the reporting tool as part of routine service improvement.

Recommendation 16: The ACT Government encourage ACT public schools to promote the social media accounts of The Office Of The Children And Young People Commissioner to ACT public school students.

Progress Since 2023

The Education Directorate has:

- Distributed resources to schools
- Promoted the Commissioner's channels through its own platforms
- Increased awareness of the Commissioner's services across school communities

Status

- Completed and ongoing: now part of routine communications.

Agreed-in-principle recommendations

The government agreed in principle to the following six recommendations of the 2023 Inquiry.

Rec. No.	Agreed-in-principle recommendation
1	The ACT Government develop an anti-racism strategy for the ACT in consultation with racially-diverse members of the community.
3	The ACT Government fund a comprehensive public anti-racism campaign.
4	The ACT Government adopt the #RacismNOTWelcome Campaign.
5	the ACT Government engage a local university to research children and young people's experiences of racism, in consultation with the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner.
6	The ACT Government provide intensive support through organisations led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure that removal of children from their families is an absolute last resort.
9	The ACT Government develop a comprehensive training program aimed at preventing racial vilification behaviours and enhancing cultural safety, to be mandatorily undertaken by all members of ACT Policing, ACT Corrective Services, Child and Youth Protection Services, and Housing ACT.

Implemented reforms that address agreed-in-principle recommendations

These recommendations have since been addressed through broader reforms, including:

- Enactment of the *Multiculturalism Act 2023*
- Working with the Commonwealth Government and the multicultural community in delivering the National Anti-Racism Framework
- Introduction of the positive duty under the *Discrimination Act 1991*
- Our Booris, Our Way implementation
- Reforms under *Next Steps for Our Kids 2022–2030*
- Expanded cultural safety training across ACT Policing, Corrective Services, CYPS and Housing ACT.

These reforms address the intent of recommendations relating to anti-racism strategy development, public campaigns, research, cultural safety training, and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

3. Future directions

The government recognises that the landscape of racial vilification, hate speech, and discrimination continues to evolve. Building on the work already undertaken, the government will continue to ensure protections remain contemporary, effective, and aligned with community expectations.

Strengthening Hate-Speech and Vilification Protections

- Continuing to examine thresholds for serious vilification offences to ensure they reflect community standards and capture emerging forms of harm.
- Continuing to improve the accessibility of civil vilification pathways, with an emphasis on early resolution, restorative approaches, and reducing procedural barriers.
- Continuing alignment with national anti-racism and anti-hate speech initiatives to support a coherent, nationwide approach.
- Continuing to strengthen preventative mechanisms, including advancing the positive duty to prevent discrimination, harassment, and vilification before it occurs.

Embedding the Positive Duty under the *Discrimination Act 1991*

- Continuing to support directorates to meet proactive obligations, integrating anti-racism expectations into organisational policies, governance, and accountability structures.
- Continuing to develop practical tools and guidance to assist agencies in identifying and addressing systemic risks.
- Continuing to monitor implementation to ensure the positive duty drives genuine cultural and systemic change.

Strengthening Community-Controlled Capacity

- Continue to support ACCO capability and workforce development, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations are well-resourced to lead community-driven, culturally led responses.
- Continue to ensure an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander human services lens is applied to each commissioning cycle and transition of proportional investment to the community-controlled sector is considered. Recognising this approach enables ACCOs to undertake long-term planning, strengthen governance, and maintain culturally safe service delivery. This work aligns with the ACT's broader commitment to strengthening the community-controlled sector under the Closing the Gap Agreement.
- Continue to deliver the Establishment and Expansion Fund to support capability and capability building activities for the remainder of the 2024-25 ACT Budget commitment.
- Continue the phased transfer of responsibilities under *Next Steps for Our Kids 2022–2030*, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to assume greater leadership in child, youth, and family services in line with the principles of self-determination.

- Continue to support self-determination and embed culturally safe practice across the human services sector, in line with the recommendations of the *Our Booris, Our Way* review.

Enhancing Reporting and Community Engagement

- Continuing to improve reporting pathways to ensure they are accessible, trauma-informed, and responsive to diverse community needs.
- Continuing to strengthen multilingual communication and outreach, ensuring equitable access to information and support.
- Continuing engagement with communities most affected by racial vilification to ensure reforms are informed by lived experience.

National Alignment

- Continuing collaboration with the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Commonwealth Government on the implementation of the National Anti-Racism Framework, ensuring ACT perspectives and lived-experience insights inform national policy settings.
- Monitoring national legislative developments, including reforms to federal anti-discrimination and hate-speech laws, to ensure ACT protections remain consistent, complementary, and responsive to evolving national expectations.
- Ensuring ACT preventative frameworks and positive-duty obligations remain compatible with national anti-racism approaches, while tailoring implementation to ACT capability, scope of responsibilities, and the needs of Canberra's diverse communities.
- Continue to progress initiatives aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

ACT Government commitment into the future

The government remains firmly committed to ensuring that Canberra is a safe, inclusive, and welcoming city where all people are respected, valued, and able to participate fully in community life.

This commitment includes ongoing monitoring of emerging issues, continuous improvement of policy and legislative settings, and continued engagement with communities affected by racial vilification to ensure responses remain effective, evidence-based, and aligned with human rights principles.

Appendix 1. Status of recommendations from the 2023 Inquiry into Racial Vilification

Rec. No.	2023 inquiry recommendation	2023 ACT Government position	2026 Update	Status (2026)
1	The ACT Government develop an anti-racism strategy for the ACT in consultation with racially-diverse members of the community.	Agreed in principle	Work absorbed into national anti-racism processes and the Multiculturalism Act 2023. Positive duty now provides a stronger preventative framework.	Superseded / Integrated
2	The ACT Government focus on promoting anti-racism in places where the ACT Government provides services	Agreed	Positive duty implemented; strengthened cultural safety and reporting obligations.	Completed & Ongoing
3	The ACT Government fund a comprehensive public anti-racism campaign.	Agreed in principle	Time-limited campaign activities completed; future work aligned nationally.	Completed / Superseded
4	The ACT Government adopt the #RacismNOTWelcome Campaign.	Agreed in principle	Government confirmed it would not adopt the campaign. While the intent of the campaign to acknowledge racism and promote change was supported, the campaign's use of street signage is not considered appropriate to the Canberran context, and hence not adopted at the time. Instead, the Government agreed to explore a positive, locally appropriate campaign that reflects the ACT's human rights leadership and Canberra's identity as a Welcoming City.	No Further Action

5	The ACT Government engage a local university to research children and young people's experiences of racism, in consultation with the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner.	Agreed in principle	The Human Rights Commission released its report 'it Really Stabs Me' in 2023 that details children and young people's experiences of racism in the ACT. Work undertaken by CYPC; integrated into broader engagement.	Completed / Integrated
6	The ACT Government provide intensive support through organisations led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure that removal of children from their families is an absolute last resort.	Agreed in principle	Ongoing cultural training under existing frameworks.	Ongoing
7	The ACT Government prioritise funding to organisations controlled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for the provision of relevant services.	Agreed	Foundational work completed; sustainability challenges identified.	Partially Progressed / Ongoing
8	The ACT Government, as a matter of priority, assist in the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing organization.	Agreed	Consultation and co-design completed; Ongoing work to embed broader engagement processes, including supporting new and existing ACCOs.	Partially Progressed / Ongoing
9	The ACT Government develop a comprehensive training program aimed at preventing racial vilification behaviours and enhancing cultural safety, to be mandatorily undertaken by all members of ACT Policing, ACT Corrective Services, Child and Youth Protection Services, and Housing ACT.	Agreed in principle	Ongoing cultural capability initiatives.	Ongoing
10	The ACT Government clarify the jurisdiction of the ACT Supreme Court in the Human Rights Act 2004 in addressing police misdemeanours, and if necessary, amend the Act to ensure the authority of the Court in this regard.	Noted	Work continues under Next Steps for Our Kids.	Ongoing / Integrated

11	The ACT Human Rights Commission review the functionality of the online reporting tool to ensure that it is accessible for people who speak languages other than English, the interface is intuitive and easy to navigate, and data collection is optimised.	Agreed	Accessibility and multilingual improvements implemented.	Completed / Integrated
12	That the requirement by the ACT Ombudsman for complainants, in the first instance, to use internal avenues to resolve complaints concerning racial vilification, be removed.	Noted	Cultural safety embedded through co-design and engagement.	Ongoing / Integrated
13	The ACT Government introduce a bill to amend the <i>Discrimination Act 1991</i> so that it also applies to ACT Policing.	Noted	Training continues as part of capability development.	Ongoing
14	The ACT Government provide information about how to lodge a racial discrimination complaint so that it: • is targeted at racial sub-sectors of the community, including international students, • is available in a range of languages, • provides facts about potential outcomes and options for redress, and is widely promoted	Existing policy	Cultural capability initiatives continue.	Ongoing
15	The ACT Government further promote the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner in racially-diverse communities.	Existing policy	Work continues under Next Steps for Our Kids.	Ongoing / Integrated
16	The ACT Government encourage ACT public schools to promote the social media accounts of the Office of the Children and Young People Commissioner to ACT public school students.	Agreed	Promotion incorporated into routine communications.	Completed & Ongoing