

# What you can do about racial harassment

- ◆ Keep a record of incidents you find offensive.
- ◆ Talk it over with someone you trust and who will keep the information confidential. This may help clarify your best course of action.
- ◆ Speak to the person who is harassing you and tell them you want them to stop, otherwise you will complain. You can do this in person, in a letter, or with a union or other representative.

If this doesn't work, or is inappropriate, you can seek advice and assistance from:

- ◆ a racial harassment contact person (many workplaces have a harassment policy)
- ◆ a manager or school counsellor
- ◆ the Human Rights Commission
- ◆ your union representative or a lawyer
- ◆ a professional disciplinary body
- ◆ the police
- ◆ the Employment Relations Service (if you have been harassed at work).  
Phone 0800 20 90 20.



Human Rights  
Commission

*Te Kāhui Tika Tangata*

Contact the Human Rights Commission

## Human Rights Commission InfoLine

0800 496 877 (toll free)  
TTY (teletypewriter) 0800 150 111  
Fax 09 377 3593 (Attn: InfoLine)  
Email [Infoline@hrc.co.nz](mailto:Infoline@hrc.co.nz)  
Website [www.hrc.co.nz](http://www.hrc.co.nz)  
Language Line available  
Sign language interpreter available

## Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland

Level 4 Tower Centre  
45 Queen Street  
PO Box 6751, Wellesley Street  
Tāmaki Makaurau  
Auckland 1141  
Waea Telephone 09 309 0874  
Waea Whakāhua Fax 09 377 3593

## Te Whanganui ā Tara – Wellington

Level 1 Vector Building  
44-52 The Terrace  
PO Box 12411, Thorndon  
Te Whanganui ā Tara  
Wellington 6144  
Waea Telephone 04 473 9981  
Waea Whakāhua Fax 04 471 6759

## Otautahi – Christchurch

Level 3 Guardian Assurance Building  
79 – 83 Hereford Street  
PO Box 1578, Otautahi  
Christchurch 8140  
Waea Telephone 03 379 2015  
Waea Whakāhua Fax 03 353 0959

Disclaimer: While we have tried to make this information as accurate as possible, it should not be regarded as legal advice.



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# Racial harassment



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## What is racial harassment?

Racial harassment is behaviour that is racist, hurtful or offensive and is either repeated or serious enough to have a harmful effect on you.

### The Human Rights Act makes this unlawful when it occurs in:

- ◆ government or state sector activities, including public education and health services
- ◆ employment
- ◆ business partnerships
- ◆ industrial and professional associations, qualifying bodies and vocational training bodies
- ◆ access to public places, vehicles and facilities
- ◆ access to goods and services
- ◆ access to land, housing and accommodation
- ◆ access to education.

### Victimisation

The Human Rights Act protects people from being victimised because they contacted the Commission about harassment, were involved in a dispute or supported another person to make a complaint.

## Examples of racial harassment

Racial harassment can involve spoken, written or visual material or a physical act.

### You may have been racially harassed if someone:

- ◆ makes offensive remarks or jokes about your race, colour, ethnicity or nationality
- ◆ mimics the way you speak, e.g. if you have an accent
- ◆ calls you racist names
- ◆ shows you racially offensive material in the workplace
- ◆ deliberately mispronounces your name.

Racial harassment may be unintentional. The person who is being offensive may be unaware of its effect, but they can still be held responsible. What is important is how the behaviour affects you or others.

### Why racial harassment is wrong

- ◆ We all have the right to be treated fairly and with respect.
- ◆ We all have the right to be free from unwelcome racial conduct.

## Why you should act

### You don't have to put up with racist behaviour you don't like

- ◆ Racial harassment is often repeated unless action is taken.
- ◆ Racial harassment may impact on how you feel about work, study or accessing services.
- ◆ Racial harassment can lower your self-esteem and cause health problems.
- ◆ Employers have a responsibility to take steps to prevent harassment and to respond to complaints. This includes harassment by employees or clients.

