

# HEALTHY & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



Increasing community resilience to withstand major social and health challenges.

OUTCOME 1	OUTCOME 2	OUTCOME 3
Increased cross-sector collaborations, strengthening community resilience to extreme weather and disasters.	Increased capacity of health organisations to respond to the health impacts of climate change.	Reduced discrimination and inequality that undermine resilience.

To access in-depth information about the other outcomes in the Healthy & Resilient Communities Impact Area, visit [lmcf.org.au/our-impact/healthy-resilient-communities](http://lmcf.org.au/our-impact/healthy-resilient-communities)

## Challenge

### Discrimination can both cause and exacerbate health inequities.

Discrimination based on race, culture and religion contributes towards social disadvantage and exclusion,<sup>1</sup> makes communities less socially cohesive,<sup>2</sup> and undermines the collective ability to build resilience. There is a large body of research that has identified the strong relationship between people's experience of discrimination, disadvantage and poor health and wellbeing, particularly mental health.

The existence of pervasive and structural racial discrimination can both cause and exacerbate health inequities.<sup>3</sup> The Scanlon Foundation has reported increased rates of discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion over the last three years.<sup>4</sup> The 2018 survey reported that 27 per cent of young people, 25 per cent of people with non-English speaking backgrounds, 34 per cent of people on very low incomes, 39 per cent of Muslims and 36 per cent of Hindu's experience discrimination in the last year.<sup>5</sup> Anti-Semitic incidents are also increasing, with a 39 per cent increase in threats in 2018.<sup>6</sup>

Discrimination against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is considered one of the most prevalent forms of discrimination in Australia.<sup>7</sup> Scanlon Foundation's 2017 Australians Today survey found that 59 per cent of Indigenous respondents experienced racial discrimination that year.<sup>8</sup> In 2015-16, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accounted for 54 per cent of complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission under the Racial Discrimination Act despite only constituting 3 per cent of the overall population.<sup>9</sup> This level of racial discrimination towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people directly impacts on their mental health,<sup>10</sup> and contributes to the extremely high rates of self-harm and suicide in Indigenous communities.<sup>11</sup>

While there is legislation and statutory bodies such as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission exist to address discrimination and subsequent disadvantage, reducing discrimination that exists informally in the community is a challenge for everyone. There is an ongoing need to increase community knowledge

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and practice of respecting the inherent value of every person and everyone's universal human rights to be treated with dignity, equality and respect, particularly when people from minority racial, cultural or religious groups are the target of discriminatory views, behaviour and practices.

## Our Response

Community resilience is largely dependent on the degree to which communities are social cohesive. High levels of social cohesion are demonstrated when people are safe from discrimination, feel a sense of belonging and trust in the community and there is mutual respect, awareness and understanding of diversity. In acknowledging that discrimination is a determinant of poor mental health and exacerbator of disadvantage, there are significant co-benefits to be gained by addressing discrimination on a structural and systems level.

**The Foundation's support is focused on:**

- **Work that addresses discrimination towards and exclusion of racial, cultural or religious minority groups on a systems or structural level.**
- **Community-based initiatives that reduce discrimination and increase understanding and respect for racial, cultural or religious minority groups.**
- **Interventions that counteract widespread discriminatory views towards racial, cultural or religious minority groups.**

**The Foundation will consider other activities that address this outcome.**

## Contact

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's Health 2016, (2016) <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/11ada76c-0572-4d01-93f4-d96ac6008a95/ah16-4-1-social-determinants-health.pdf.aspx>
- <sup>2</sup> Marcus A, Mapping Social Cohesion. The Scanlon Foundation Surveys 2018, <https://scanlonfoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Social-Cohesion-2018-report-26-Nov.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> Williams D, Lawrence J, and Brigette A, *Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research*, Annual Review of Public Health, <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040218-043750>
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Executive Council of Australian Jewry, *Report on Antisemitism in Australia 2018*, <http://www.ecaj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ECAJ-Antisemitism-Report-2018.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Beyond Blue, Discrimination against Indigenous Australians: a snapshot of the view of non-Indigenous people aged 25-44, (2014), <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/docs/default-source/research-project-files/bl1337-report---tns-discrimination-against-indigenous-australians.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- <sup>8</sup> Scanlon Foundation, *Australians Today: Landmark research into multiculturalism 2016*, <https://scanlonfoundation.org.au/australians-today/>
- <sup>9</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission *2015-16 Complaint statistics*, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/AHRC%202015%20-%202016%20Complaint%20Statistics.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> VicHealth, Making the link between cultural discrimination and health (2007), <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/Letter/VicHealthLetter-30.pdf?la=en&hash=2F526AA777079C26F3C87B619452ABDFBBAC310E>
- <sup>11</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's welfare 2017, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/89b96698-1f50-449c-9260-7c0243b109be/aihw-australias-welfare-2017-chapter7-2.pdf.aspx>