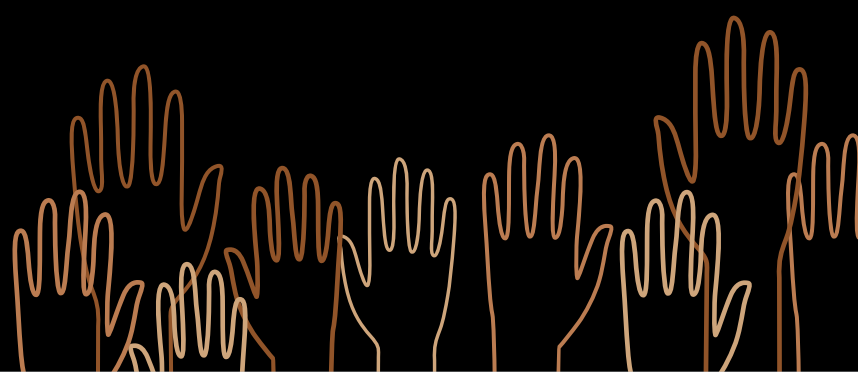



# POSITION STATEMENT



## Black Lives Matter: Psychologists take a stand against racism

**AIPA** | The Australian Indigenous  
Psychologists Association

 **APS** Australian  
Psychological  
Society

 **ACP**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
Counselling  
Psychologists

**ACPA**  
THE AUSTRALIAN  
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
ASSOCIATION

 Australian Psychology  
Accreditation Council

 **HODSPA**  
Incorporated

 **ICP**  
INSTITUTE OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Institute of  
Private Practising  
Psychologists 

## POSITION STATEMENT

# Black Lives Matter: Psychologists take a stand against racism



Australian psychologists stand united against racism in all forms.

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) and the Australian Psychological Society (APS), in conjunction with the Association of Counselling Psychologists (ACP), Australian Clinical Psychology Association (ACPA), Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC), Heads of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association (HODSPA), Institute of Clinical Psychologists (ICP), and Institute of Private Practising Psychologists (IPPP), stand together to call out and combat racism in our profession, our discipline and our society.

Recent international events have put a spotlight on issues of systemic racism in our society. The resonance of the experiences of African American, Black American and Native American people in the US in their interactions with law enforcement and incarceration with those of Indigenous Australians demonstrates the global reach of this issue. In Australia, the Black Lives Matter movement has refocused attention on black deaths in custody and the disproportionate rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by the criminal justice system, where more than 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have **died in custody** since the end of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody in 1991.

This movement has reminded us to reflect on the role we must play, as individuals and as a profession, in addressing racism and promoting equality and the social and emotional wellbeing of all Australians.

We recognise that racism impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in many ways. It is historical, political, social, cultural, systemic and direct. The ongoing disparities in social and emotional wellbeing remind us of our responsibility to do more to stand against systemic racism.

In 2009, the **Boatshed Racism Roundtable Declaration** recognised that racism against Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples exists in various forms and in all systems in Australia today. Research evidence shows that racism is a barrier to the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with a destructive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, employment, health, mental health and wellbeing, well beyond its immediate impact.

Racism completely undermines all efforts to close the gap in health and other outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

We reaffirm our commitment to the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations peoples of Australia, and the right of Indigenous peoples to exercise authority in education, employment, health and wellbeing for their communities, with the respectful support of Australian governments. We remain committed to ensuring that high quality research and evidence are at the heart of public policy and evidence practice, and that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are heard in shaping policy and practice.

Our profession is not immune to racism and discrimination. In 2016, the **APS Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** acknowledged psychology's role in contributing to their mistreatment and the erosion of culture. The cultural assumptions that underlie psychological assessment and diagnostic practices, approaches to treatment, and our field's complicity in research and policy provided the veneer of scientific rigor to harmful policies that further marginalised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our profession has not always respected their skills, expertise, world views and unique wisdom developed over thousands of years.

In 2020, we are reaffirming our commitment to action, and calling on others to join us.

We acknowledge that racism is present in the psychology profession and discipline, and we remain committed to addressing it.

Many organisations and professional bodies are taking a public stand against racism. We are asking more from the psychology profession.

Our profession has a responsibility to acknowledge, address and combat racism, and support people impacted by racism and discrimination.

As psychologists, we have a professional and ethical responsibility to defend and uphold the social and emotional wellbeing of all people, providing equitable, effective, and accessible psychological services.

Psychologists must do their best to support persons impacted by racism and discrimination and raise our voices against discriminatory systems and practice that threaten the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals and communities.

And importantly, we must also reflect on ourselves and address our own racism and unconscious biases.

To start to address racism, we need to purposefully strive for social justice and look not only at how we as individuals and a profession can be part of change, but what we must do to reform our systems and practice to address systemic racism. Successfully standing against racism will depend on our willingness and ability to engage in reflection, truth telling, (have) courageous conversations and working together towards action.

**The time for action is now. We invite all psychologists to stand together against racism and discrimination of all kinds.**



Professor Pat Dudgeon, Inaugural Member  
Australian Indigenous Psychologists  
Association (AIPA)  
[www.indigenoupsychology.com.au](http://www.indigenoupsychology.com.au)



Tania Dalton, Co-Chair  
Australian Indigenous Psychologists  
Association (AIPA)  
[www.indigenoupsychology.com.au](http://www.indigenoupsychology.com.au)



Ros Knight, President  
Australian Psychological Society (APS)  
[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)



Duane Smith, Executive Chair  
Association of Counselling Psychologists (ACP)  
[www.counsellingpsychologists.org](http://www.counsellingpsychologists.org)



Associate Professor Vida Bliokas, President  
Australian Clinical Psychology Association (ACPA)  
[www.acpa.org.au](http://www.acpa.org.au)



John Dunn, Chair  
Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC)  
[www.psychologycouncil.org.au](http://www.psychologycouncil.org.au)



A.Prof Renata Meuter, Chair  
Heads of Departments and Schools of  
Psychology Australia (HODPSA)  
[www.hodpsa.org.au](http://www.hodpsa.org.au)



Dr Marjorie Collins

Dr Marjorie Collins, President  
Institute of Clinical Psychologists (ICP)  
[www.icp.org.au](http://www.icp.org.au)



Radek Stratil, President  
Institute of Private Practising Psychologists (IPPP)  
[www.psychologists.org.au](http://www.psychologists.org.au)

