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Centre for Resilient
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Can do better: mapping ordinary anti-racism and pro-sociality in Victoria

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This report was researched and written on unceded Country.
We pay our respect to Elders past, present and future,
and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
communities' ongoing struggles for empowerment,
healing and self-determination.

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The Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies

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Executive Summary

Findings

80% A considerable majority of the respondents reported enjoying cross-cultural contact, readiness to meet people from different cultural backgrounds, had comfort and confidence in socialising interculturally, and were ready to meet people from different cultures

Less than five per cent of Victorian respondents declared a disagreement towards engagement with cultural difference, and around **15%** were unsure. The latter represents a potential target group for shifting dispositions towards embracing diversity.

Only half of the respondents **49.6%** reported interacting with Indigenous people.

The proportion of Victorians prepared to commit to specific forms of cross-cultural interaction (such as 'looking out for' people from different cultural backgrounds, sharing and introducing themselves) was between **50%** and **60%**.

Only **34%** agreed with the proposition that they served as a bridge between different cultures.

46% respondents said they get upset when hearing racist comments and would take action in family and social settings if they witnessed racism. However, preparedness to take action in public settings (e.g. workplaces) and to defend strangers from racism, was reported by only half, with a third unsure if they would take action.

 Preparedness to participate in collective anti-racist action was found in only one-third of respondents.

Pro-social anti-racist attitudes, cross-cultural interaction and everyday anti-racism were consistently higher among people residing in metropolitan areas, women, younger people, people born overseas, and people who hold higher education, are employed, and earn a higher income (with more mixed findings based on age and indigeneity).



 The commitment of men and women varied across types of anti-racist practices, and everyday anti-racism, largely reflecting gender roles, spheres and confidences.

Religious non-Christians were more committed to intercultural interaction and anti-racist practices compared to Christians and the non-religious.



 Antipathy towards out-groups in Victoria follows national trends, with Islamophobia being the strongest manifestation of targeted intolerance. Rates of intolerance towards African, Jewish and Aboriginal Australians were even higher in Victoria, relative to national trends.

Recommendations

- 1 Introduce an action plan to lift the scope for all Victorians to hear from Indigenous Australians on colonialism and dispossession and their ongoing effects.
 - 2 Enhance awareness of the benefits of pro-sociality, transversal enabling, and everyday anti-racism, as in many cases over a third were unsure on how to respond to questions on those matters (i.e. they neither agreed nor disagreed).
 - 3 Reduce widespread intolerance towards Muslim, African, Jewish and Aboriginal Australians as an urgent anti-racism imperative.
 - 4 Examine why religious non-Christians are more prepared for cross-cultural interaction than Christians and the non-religious, including the motivations and tactics behind this difference, in order to lift anti-racism among Christians and the non-religious.
 - 5 Ensure that the potential structural effect of anti-racist action is emphasised and celebrated. If sufficient people in a given locality or setting speak up against racism, it is possible to affect norms in those settings.
 - 6 Lift the societal expectation that people should take prosocial action to assist people not from their immediate orbit of relations. There is also a need to make visible the extraordinary benefits of such action (e.g., to sense of belonging and citizenship).
-

Scholarly contribution

The project addresses the relatively neglected subject of anti-racism in Australia, including existing strengths and capacities, and practices that activate Victorians. It draws a rare empirical picture on anti-racist pro-sociality and generates for the first time globally, quantitative data on transversal enabling.



Part 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Everyday pro-sociality and anti-racism in Victoria

Australia is a nation inhabited originally by diverse groups of First Nations peoples. They were joined by migrants since the 1800s, first and foremost from Europe, then from the rest of the world. The colonial era was a time of structural racism, manifest as frontier violence and Aboriginal dispossession (Grewcock, 2018; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Racially supremacist exclusions were implemented to reinforce white privilege and domination (e.g., Reynolds, 1996). There was also persistent anti-colonial resistance including anti-racism during this era, although its depth, formality and reach were often limited (Nelson & Dunn, 2013). The recognition and acknowledgment of Australia's colonial past, and of continuing challenges to racial equity, are an important form of anti-racism. More recently, multiculturalism as a demographic fact and a means of diversity management, has enjoyed nearly half a century of bipartisan support and remains highly endorsed by the public (O'Donnell, 2023). Intercultural connection and cooperation are integral to daily life in various settings like schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods (e.g., Onyx et al., 2011; Wise, 2009), and hold social and economic promises for Victorian society.

The empirical research regarding cultural diversity in Australia has often focused on racism, with a large portion engaged with discriminatory attitudes and experiences of racism (Ben et al., 2024; Elias, Mansouri & Paradies, 2021). In the context of COVID-19, increased racism has been reported by human rights commissions during the early months of the outbreak, and research has documented numerous xenophobic and racist incidents that have transpired since (Ang & Mansouri 2023; Ben & Elias, 2024; Kamp et al., 2023). Anti-racism has been somewhat neglected in this research. This is problematic as the anti-racist capacities of everyday Australians are critical to successful management of diversity and to thriving intercultural relationships.

In Victoria, where about half of the population were either born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas (Victorian Government, 2021a), cultural diversity and intercultural contact are a part of everyday life. There is growing awareness among policymakers, in Victoria and federally, of the insidiousness and ill effects of racism, and recognition that further anti-racism action and better policies are urgently needed (Ben et al., 2024). We have also witnessed watershed moments in the development of anti-racism, such as the ascendance of the Black Lives Matter movement and protests against Indigenous deaths in custody, and responses to racism in major institutions, including Football clubs and schools (e.g., AHRC, 2021; Refugee Council of Australia, 2023; Cassidy, 2023).

Key policymakers have devoted more resources to improving anti-racism action. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has been developing a new National Anti-Racism Framework (AHRC, 2022), whereas in Victoria, racism has been central to recent inquiries, for example on vilification and racial injustices (Parliament of Victoria, 2021; VEOHRC, 2022; Yoorrook Justice Commission, 2022). State-level commitment to anti-racism is also apparent, for example, in the ongoing development of the Victorian Government's Anti-Racism Action Plan, the establishment of a new anti-racism taskforce, and allocation of funding to community organisations (Victorian Government, 2021b). Other initiatives take place at municipal levels, and via community and local projects (e.g., Peucker et al., 2022).

In the sphere of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, Victoria shares the same general history as the nation, with colonial frontier warfare and dispossession that have existed alongside cultural continuity and a strife for Indigenous self-determination. The Victorian state government has begun engaging with the colonialist history, and

“Importantly, in the face of racism, we also see instances of inter-personal prosocial action, support and care.”

has worked to provide acknowledgment of Indigenous presence, and develop mechanisms for Indigenous input into decision making. In 2020, a formal truth-telling and justice process commenced in Victoria, with the Yoorrook Justice Commission leading an inquiry into injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples in the state. The inquiry is due to conclude in mid-2025, and will include recommendations for healing, system reform, practical changes and future treaties (Yoorrook Justice Commission, 2024). Meanwhile however, in the Indigenous Voice Referendum on 14th October 2023, only 45.5% of Victorian voters supported the proposal for constitutional recognition and voice to national parliament. Despite the low rates, this was the highest ‘Yes’ vote of all the states (although the ACT was 60.9%), ahead of the national average of 39.6%. There was a distinct geography to that vote, with the inner-city areas voting ‘Yes’, and the Melbourne suburbs voting ‘No’ (Riga et al., 2023).

Importantly, in the face of racism, we also see instances of inter-personal prosocial action, support and care. Everyday pro-sociality, expressed in practices such as mutual care, helping, learning, sharing and other forms of exchange, can enhance belonging and reduce prejudice and conflict between groups. While such practices may be an important dimension of everyday anti-racism, their occurrence among Victorians has been under-studied. There are forms of day-to-day anti-racism action and prosocial intercultural interaction that already exist, as practiced by Victorians in everyday life, often in public and semi-public places. Yet they have received little attention in research and policymaking and need better understanding and possibly strengthening. What are the prevalence and forms of anti-racism that occur every day? What factors may underlie ordinary action and pro-sociality? How can they be enhanced and encouraged, specifically among Victorians?

1.2. Theoretical orientations

1.2.1. Everyday anti-racism

To guide our analysis of how racism may be contested in daily life in Victoria, we draw on existing research on everyday anti-racism (e.g., Aquino, 2016; 2020; Nelson et al., 2011). We use a social constructivist approach to racism (Dunn et al., 2004; Forrest & Dunn, 2007), which allows us to see racism as a social construction, generating varied forms of racist beliefs in different contexts (Dunn et al., 2004: 410). This justifies an approach to anti-racism that targets racism in ways that are spatially and socially sensitive. But our focus on everyday racism (e.g., Essed, 1991) also highlights the systemic and routine nature of practices of racial discrimination.

We conceptualise anti-racism as thought and/or practice that aims to confront or eradicate racism and to enable equality between racial/ethnic groups (Bonnett, 2000: 4; 2006). Anti-racism takes numerous forms that can be effective, including social movements, programs to reduce intergroup prejudice, institutional interventions and organisational development, education programs and diversity training, bystander action, social marketing and media campaigns, and is also manifest as the ‘cultural repertoires’ of coping with racism (Mansouri & Vergani, 2018; Aquino, 2020; Ben et al., 2020; Paradies, 2016).

An important but under-studied dimension of anti-racism encompasses the practices people may use to confront or eradicate racism, or to induce intergroup equality, in their everyday lives. The limited global research on everyday anti-racism focuses, for example, on the actions that people targeted by racism as well as bystanders may take in confronting perpetrators and speaking out, and on kinds of everyday practices of bridging cultural differences especially in public and semi-public places of encounter (e.g., Aquino, 2020; Nelson et al., 2011). One strand of everyday anti-racism scholarship focuses on the negotiation of cultural difference and countering of racism in spaces of daily cross-cultural encounter (Aquino, 2020: 222-224). Other studies, looking at bystander anti-racism, point to the productive effects of their actions on targets, perpetrators, and bystanders themselves, and their strong and mostly untapped potential to enact anti-racism, especially in settings where the social norms that are intolerant of racism are more established (Nelson et al., 2011).

1.2.2. Everyday pro-sociality

Our approach to everyday pro-sociality and intercultural contact builds on established research on prosocial practices and ways of living together in public and semi-public places. Contact theory, and discussions of the optimal conditions of contact (equal status, shared goals, cooperation, institutional support, and contact quality) (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), have been foundational to this research. A substantial part of this scholarship has been dedicated to intercultural contact, in many cases with the aim of exploring how prejudice could be reduced. Concepts focused on habitual interactions, frequently in semi-public and public places, such as everyday cosmopolitanism (Dunn, 2016; Noble, 2013), multicultural/multiculturalism (Amin, 2002; Wise & Velayutham, 2009), interculturalism (Askins, 2016; Spijkers & Loopmans, 2020), and convivialities (Harris, 2014; Overing & Passes, 2000) have engaged with questions about living together amid (and despite) difference, while contesting popular discourses that emphasise conflict and question migrants' capacities for peaceful and productive co-living.

One priority of the current research project was mapping the important role of transversal enablers in embodied intercultural contact situations (Wise, 2009) as they undertake what Noble (2009) has characterised as the 'labour of community'. We use the idea of transversal enablers as people who "go out of their way to create connections between culturally different residents in their local area" (Wise, 2009:24). They work in public spaces but appear to have their strongest intercultural benefit in micro-publics. To use earlier concepts, we may say that through their daily actions these enablers cultivate bridging social capital (after Putnam, 2000). Micro-publics include workplaces, schools, places of worship, libraries, sporting clubs, playgrounds, and community events (Amin 2002; Ho 2011). In these places, cross-cultural interactions may be often repeated with the same people, generating familiarity (rather than anonymity), in settings where there are peer governance and some rules of civility.

1.2.3. Resilience

We also drew on ideas of community resilience to adapt, recover and grow in the face of acute adversity, but expanded to include the capacity to resist, systemic racism. We deploy resilience as dynamic, relational, contextual and multi-systemic (e.g., Bottrell, 2009; Ungar, 2021; Sims-Schouten & Gilbert 2022), which can relate to individuals, communities, institutions, organisations and wider societies.

1.3. Aims

Insufficient attention has been given to the day-to-day anti-racism that already exists, as practiced by Victorians in everyday life, and to ways in which ordinary Victorians' actions may be leveraged for a safer and fairer society. This project examines the factors that may underlie ordinary action and pro-sociality, and seeks to build on existing strengths, capacities, and practices, to activate Victorians and address racism across interrelated levels where it operates (e.g., structurally, institutionally, interpersonally).

The project had four aims: 1) Map the frequencies and forms of everyday anti-racism and prosocial attitudes and interaction in Victoria; 2) Identify the factors and social variations that underlie everyday action; 3) Explore transversal enabler practices quantitatively, including their prevalence; and 4) Use these insights to recommend anti-racism practice, programs, and policy, and to inform action and activate the Victorian population. To our knowledge, this is the first global survey to examine everyday anti-racism practices on such a large scale, and the first to quantitatively measure transversal enabler (TVE) practices. This research will be complemented by an ongoing review of existing anti-racism measures, to further guide effective anti-racism action in Victoria and gauge the best ways anti-racism could be quantitatively assessed.

“ To our knowledge, this is the first global survey to examine everyday anti-racism practices on such a large scale. ”



Part 2. Method and sample characteristics

2.1. Methods

This research is based on a Victoria-wide survey on dispositions towards anti-racism and prosocial behaviour. An online survey of 4,516 Victorians, aged 18 years of age or older, was conducted between 16 November 2020 and 20 January 2021, several weeks after Victoria's 112 days of lockdown due to COVID-19. The survey was designed by the research team, using, and often adapting, established measures on anti-racism and pro-sociality (see Appendix B for survey items and sources). To administer the survey, we used the online survey platform Qualtrics. Respondents were recruited by the online panel provider Dynata from a pool of approximately 300,000 Australian panellists.

The survey asked respondents about their prosocial attitudes and interaction, experiences of racism, concerns about intergroup marriage, and everyday anti-racism. Survey items were constructed based on measures adapted from previous research in areas such as intergroup contact and intergroup dialogue, intercultural communication, social capital, cosmopolitanism, everyday multiculturalism, and anti-racism. The survey also asked respondents about their experiences of racism and discrimination, based on items from The Face Up to Racism national survey conducted by the Challenging Racism Project (CRP) (Blair et al., 2017). As in the Face Up to Racism survey, we used Bogardus social distance measures relating to concern about the marriage of a family member to someone from other cultural groups, to indicate perceived (in) tolerance towards specific racial, ethnic, national and religious groups of Australians.

Univariate analyses produced descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies) for all variables, and bivariate analyses tested for associations between pairs of variables of interest, for example, between demographics and measures of anti-racism. Bivariate analyses drew on crosstabulations and

chi-square tests, and a p-level of 0.05 (two-tailed) was used to interpret the significance of associations between variables. Analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 27 (IBM, 2020).

2.2. Sample

A breakdown of key participant demographics is provided in Table 1. The sample resembled the Victorian population in terms of participants' sex, age groups, split between urban and regional residence, and birth overseas or to parents who were born overseas (ABS, 2021a). The sample overrepresented Indigenous people, holders of tertiary qualifications, and people who were unemployed, compared with the Victorian population.

- **Age:** Participants were well distributed across age groups (18 or over). The largest age groups were people 65 or over (21.9%), and aged 35-44 (20.5%).
- **Sex:** There were somewhat more female (52.9%) than male (46.7%) participants, and remaining participants identified as Other (including non-binary/gender fluid) (0.4%). By comparison, females and males accounted respectively for 51.4% and 48.6% of the adult Victorian population (ABS, 2021a).
- **Residence:** Participant residential postcode data were matched to their respective LGA, which were then coded as metropolitan/regional/remote areas. Most respondents (80.7%) lived in metropolitan areas (compared with 77.2% in Victoria based on the census). Other participants lived in regional (16.5%) and remote (2.8%) areas. We produced a map of geographical distribution based on participant postcodes (see Map 1).

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders:** 5.5% of participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, a rate which exceeds that of people who identify as Indigenous in Victoria (0.8%) (ABS, 2021a).
- **Country of birth:** Most participants were born in Australia (73%), and the rest were born overseas (27%), across 92 countries. The next top three countries of birth among the Victorian population were India (4.0%), England (2.7%) and China (2.6%) (ABS, 2022).
- **Parents' birth country:** 40.7% reported that their mother was born overseas, while 43% reported that their father was born overseas.
- **1st or 2nd generation of migration:** 48.1% of participants were either born overseas (27.1%), or were born in Australia and had one or both of their parents born overseas (21%).
- **Language:** The main language spoken at respondents' home was overwhelmingly English (88.1%).
- **Religion:** Nearly half (45.1%) of participants were Christian, and another large group (40.8%) reported having no religion, being agnostic or being atheist. Other religious backgrounds reported by participants were Hindu (4.7%), Buddhist (3.7%), Muslim (2.5%) and Jewish (1.2%).
- **Education:** Most participants had tertiary qualifications (53.7%; compared with 45.7% in Victoria) (ABS, 2021a), an over-representation which is fairly common in online surveys. Another large group of participants' highest qualification was trade or TAFE qualification (19.7%), the HSC (21.2%), and 5.4% had no formal qualifications.
- **Employment:** While 89.1% of those in the labour force were employed, a relatively large proportion of respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey (10.9%). This compares with 7.1% who were unemployed in Victoria in November 2020 (ABS, 2020), while adults' unemployment was 4.7% at the time of the Census in 2021 (ABS, 2021b).
- **Income:** About half of the participants (48%) earned less than \$50,000 annually, while a third (33.5%) earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and 18.6% earned \$100,000 or more.

Table 1. Demographics of the Mapping Ordinary Anti-Racism survey, Victoria, 2020-2021

Demographic	Response categories	% of respondents	% in 2021 census (18 or over)
Age (n=3,945)	18-24	10.7	10.8
	25-34	17.8	19.1
	35-44	20.5	18.0
	45-54	13.7	16.2
	55-64	15.5	14.6
	65+	21.9	21.4
Sex (n=4,448)	Female	52.9	51.4
	Male	46.7	48.6
Residence (n=4,351)	Metro	80.7	77.2
	Regional	16.5	22.7
	Remote	2.8	0.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (n=4,465)	No	94.5	99.2
	Yes	5.5	0.8
Country of birth (n=4,331)	Australia-born	73	62.6
	Overseas-born	27	37.4

Demographic	Response categories	% of respondents	% in 2021 census (18 or over)
Migrant generation (Australia-born) (n=3,138)	Australia-born, to two Australian-born parents	71.4	68.2
	Australia-born, to at least one parent born overseas (2nd generation migrant)	28.6	31.8
Main language spoken at home (n=4,448)	English	88.1	70.4
	Not English	11.9	29.6
Religion (n=4,214)	No religion, agnostic or atheist	40.8	41.0
	Buddhist	3.7	3.6
	Christian	45.1	45.7
	Hindu	4.7	3.4
	Jewish	1.2	0.8
	Muslim	2.5	3.8
	Other religions	2	1.8
	Mixed religions	0.1	NA
Highest level of education (n=4,428)	No formal qualifications	5.4	7.4
	Higher School Certificate (year 12) or equivalent	21.2	30.2
	Trade or TAFE qualification	19.7	16.7
	Tertiary qualification	53.7	45.7**
Employment status (n=2,929)*	Unemployed	10.9	4.7
	Employed	89.1	95.3
Personal annual income (n=3,952)	Up to 49,999	48	56.9 (up to 51,999)***
	50,000 to 99,999	33.5	29.3 (52,000 to 103,999)
	100,000 or more	18.6	13.8 (104,000 or more)

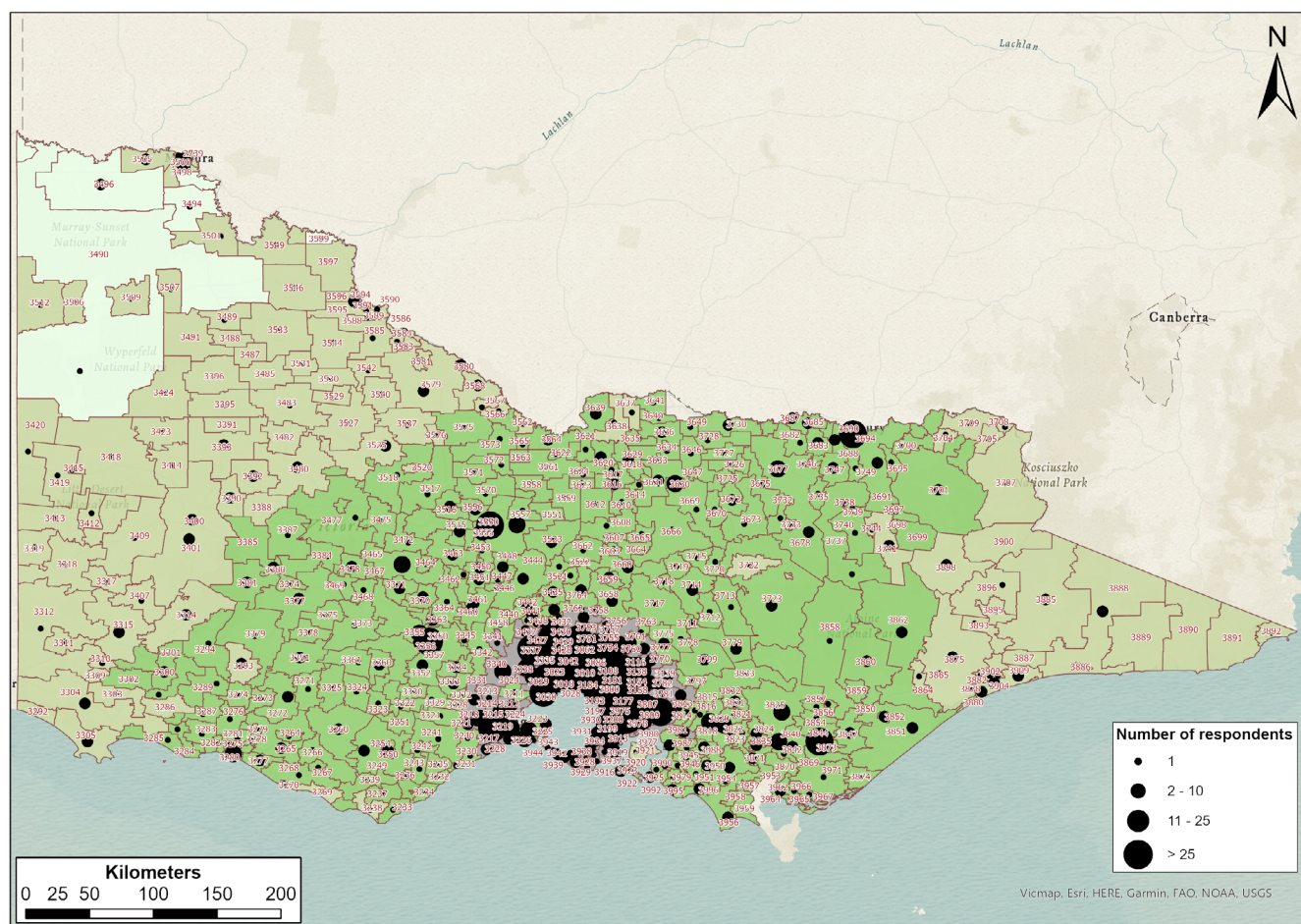
Source: ABS TableBuilder, 2021 Census.

*Note: Does not include people not in the labour force (e.g., retired, students, carers).

** Includes 11.5% with Diploma/Advanced Diploma.

*** The respective Census categories for income are somewhat different to those used in the survey, including: 'up to 51,999'; '52,000 to 103,999'; and '104,000 or more'.

Map 1. Geographic distribution of respondents' residence, Victoria, November 2020 – January 2021.





Part 3. Findings: Descriptive analyses

3.1. Pro-social attitudes, interactions, and trust

We found generally favourable Victorian attitudes towards intercultural contact. About four in five participants agreed with statements about enjoying different aspects of intercultural contact (Table 2). These include meeting with and getting to know people from different cultural backgrounds (81.5%); enjoying being around people from different cultural backgrounds (80.5%); and enjoying exchanging ideas with people from different cultures (79.3%). When posed as a statement in opposition to difference (“I don’t like to be with people from different cultural backgrounds”), respondents disagreed, with 69% indicating they like to be with people from different cultural backgrounds. The proportion of Victorians who do not like being around culturally diverse groups is small, between three and 17 percent depending on the question wording.

Agreement with statements about comfort around people from different cultural backgrounds was also generally high, including feeling self-confident and comfortable socialising with people from different cultural backgrounds (78.7%). Respondents indicated that they preferred to be with other people who are open to cultural difference (73.2%). Less than one-in-twenty Victorians disagreed with these prompts about engaging with cultural difference. This indicates strong everyday public embrace of diversity.

A set of questions examined the depth of the preparedness to embrace difference. Only 57.9% felt they could develop a romantic relationship with someone from a different cultural group. Half (50.3%) agreed that they would accept living near a mosque. One-quarter were unsure about these items, and one-in-five were not prepared for such ‘closeness’. In broad terms this means that while 80% of Victorians are positive about engaging with diversity, just over 50% are prepared to engage in deeper forms of cross-cultural contact.

We found that a majority had trust in people of different cultural backgrounds (68.1%), with slightly less trust for people of different religious beliefs (62.8%) (see below related findings on rates experiencing mistrust due to cultural and religious background). Only six and eight per cent of Victorians did not have trust across culture and religion, respectively, and almost one-in-three were unsure. These levels were somewhat lower compared with 2018 World Values Survey data from Australia, where 75.9% said they trusted people of another nationality, and 73.3% said they trusted people of another religion (WVS, 2018). The response options varied in these surveys, but the trends are similar, with the clear majority trusting across difference.

We found high agreement with broad statements on intercultural interaction and learning. Nearly nine in ten respondents (87.5%) had interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds to them, and around four in five respondents (84.1%) also agreed that they learn new things when with people from different cultural backgrounds. The extent and intensity of Victorians’ cross-cultural interaction was more modest for forms of relationship of more substance and specificity. Fewer participants (68%) had a long-term friendship with someone from a different cultural group, but this still represents a large proportion of the Victorian population. Interaction with Indigenous people was reported by only about half of the respondents (49.6%). This is a troublesome finding and presents a challenge to non-Indigenous peoples’ ability to understand the unique and ongoing effects of colonialism, with little first-hand experience that could aid in contesting what are often pervasive stereotypes and misinformation about Indigenous Australians. About half of the respondents had participated in cultural events with people from different cultural backgrounds (57.8%).

Table 2. Prosocial attitudes, interaction and trust, Victorians, 2020-2021

Statement	Agreement (agree or strongly agree (%))	Neither agree or disagree (%)	Disagreement (disagree or strongly disagree (%))
Pro-social attitudes			
I like meeting and getting to know people from different cultural backgrounds	81.5	15.1	3.4
I enjoy being around people from different cultural backgrounds	80.5	16.5	3.1
I enjoy exchanging ideas with people from different cultures	79.3	17.4	3.3
I feel self-confident and comfortable socialising with people from different cultural backgrounds	78.7	16.3	5
I feel more comfortable with people who are open to people from different cultural backgrounds	73.2	22.6	4.3
I don't like to be with people from different cultural backgrounds	17.1	13.9	69
I feel I could develop a romantic relationship with someone from a different cultural group	57.9	27.2	14.9
I would accept living near a mosque	50.3	27.6	22.1
Trust			
I trust people who don't share my cultural background	68.1	26.2	5.7
I trust people of different religious beliefs	62.8	29.2	7.9
Pro-social interaction			
I interact with people who have a different cultural background to me	87.6	8.8	3.6
I learn new things when I am with people from different cultural backgrounds	84.1	12.6	3.3
I have a long-term friendship with a person from a different cultural background to me	68	13.9	18.1
I participate in cultural events with people from different cultural backgrounds	57.8	25.9	16.3
I interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	49.6	30.6	19.8

3.2. Transversal enablers

We found high readiness to meet new people from different cultural backgrounds (84.5%), which was consistent with attitudinal variables in the previous section. However, the reported readiness for that interaction was higher than reported engagement in actual practices. Positive dispositions on specific forms of cross-cultural contact and making decisions to enact TVE practices were more modest. Between about 40% and 60% of respondents partook in specific TVE practices involving people from other cultural backgrounds. These included dispositions towards contact facilitation among respondents: going out of their way to make people from different cultures feel welcome (60.5%); looking out for people from other cultural backgrounds (47.6%), and looking for opportunities to interact more generally (45.4%). One-third of respondents (34%) were able to affirm that they had served as a bridge between people of different cultures. These respondents are demonstrating a version of what may be referred to as exceptional volition, that is, forms of transversal enabling that are purposefully anti-racist. These findings denote a high-level readiness for TVE (85%), yet a lesser likelihood to make an effort to do so (45-60%). Far fewer respondents reported they had actually acted as a TVE, through their bridging practices (34%). Dunn and Nelson (2011) had found similar gaps between disposition and action for pro-social anti-racism. This suggests that for Victorians there is an under-delivery on their TVE ambitions.

Respondents were asked about specific forms of cross-cultural exchange, introductions and invitations. Three in five participants agreed that they usually introduced themselves to new people from different cultural backgrounds (60%). Other questions focused on more specific practices of sharing and exchange among respondents, for example, as involving knowledge and material (e.g., food, gifts): sharing knowledge about things like shopping, schools and local services with people (57.8%); sharing food with people from different cultural groups (56.9%); consulting colleagues from different cultural backgrounds (54.4%); exchanging small things like food and gifts with people from different cultural backgrounds who live near them (42.4%). Only one in ten did not undertake such activities. As in the previous section, agreement rates dropped for more personal forms of interaction, more intimate interactions, and unique, spatially demarcated localities (such as 'home') to about a half of the respondents. Only about half invited people of other cultures to their home (52.9%); and invited them to do things together (48.7%). In sum, while 85% of Victorians feel ready for cross-cultural interaction, the rates of reported actual interaction are around about half.



“ We found high readiness to meet new people from different cultural backgrounds (84.5%). ”

Table 3. Transversal enablers, Victorians, 2020-2021

Statement	Agreement (agree or strongly agree (%))	Neither agree or disagree (%)	Disagreement (disagree or strongly disagree (%))
Disposition on cross cultural contact			
I'm always ready to meet new people from different cultures	84.5	112.7	2.8
I go out of my way to make people from different cultures feel welcome	60.5	29.9	9.6
I look out for people from other cultural backgrounds	47.6	17.4	15
I look for opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds	45.5	37.3	17.3
I serve as a bridge between people of different cultures	34	40.8	25.2
Cross cultural behaviour: invitations, exchange			
I usually introduce myself to new people from different cultures	60	30.3	9.7
I share my knowledge about things like shopping, schools and local services with people	57.8	28.1	14.1
I have never shared my food with people from different cultural groups	25.6	17.5	56.9
At work, I often consult colleagues from different cultural backgrounds	54.4	33.9	11.7
I It is common for me to greet people from different cultures whom I don't know	54.2	29.7	16.2
I invite people from other cultures to my home	52.9	28.7	18.4
I invite people from other cultures to do things together	48.7	34.2	17.1
I exchange small things like food and gifts with people from different cultural backgrounds who live near me	42.4	31.3	26.3

3.3. Experiences of racism

We assessed respondents' experiences of racism, operationalised as forms of discrimination because of one's cultural or religious background (Table 4.1). The most commonly reported form of discrimination was mistrust (60.7%), a finding which is consistent with the above-mentioned findings on lack of trust. Somewhat lower rates of respondents reported experiences of being treated less respectfully because of their cultural or religious background (57.1%), followed by experiences of verbal abuse (52.3%).

We also examined the settings where experiences of racism took place (Table 4.2). We focused on the frequency of discrimination because of one's cultural or religious background, across 11 settings. The highest rates of respondents reporting experiencing racism was in the workplace (43.6%), in an educational institution (42.9%), on public transport or in the street (41.7%), and at a shop or a restaurant (41.1%). Other settings where racism was

experienced included online (37.3%), when renting or buying a house (35.9%), at a sporting event (35.8%), in dealing with the police and court system (33.6%), and when seeking healthcare (32.9%). The least frequently reported experiences were at a friend's or family member's home (28.8%), and at the respondent's own home (24%). Findings from the 2015-2016 national survey (Blair et al., 2017: 10), show that workplaces (32.8%), education (32.8%), public transport/on the street (34.8%) and shop/restaurant (32.7%) were the leading settings where racism was experienced, as in the current survey. As these rates show, experiences of racism were generally more common in these settings by about 7 to 11 percentage points. In the current survey, experiences of racism appeared to be less common across these settings compared to research with Asian Australians conducted during 2020 in the context of COVID-19 (see Kamp et al., 2021: 17).

Table 4.1. Experiences with racism, by forms, Victorians, 2020-2021

How often do you feel that because of your cultural or religious background ...	Never (%)	Hardly ever - Very often (%)
People act as if you are not to be trusted	39.3	60.7
You are treated less respectfully	42.9	57.1
You are called names or similarly insulted	47.7	52.3

Table 4.2. Experiences with racism, by settings, Victorians, 2020-2021

How often have you experienced discrimination because of your cultural or religious background in the following situations ...	Never (%)	Hardly ever - Very often (%)
In the workplace	56.4	43.6
In an educational institution	57.1	42.9
On public transport or in the street	58	42
At a shop or restaurant	58.9	41.1
Online	62.7	37.3
When renting or buying a house	64.1	35.9
At a sporting event	64.2	35.8
In any dealings with the police and court system	66.4	33.6
In seeking healthcare	67.1	32.9
At a friend/family members' home	71.2	28.8
At home	76	24

3.4. Concerns about inter-marriage

We also measured racist attitudes expressed by respondents, by assessing their concerns about inter-marriage, that is, how concerned they would feel if one of their closest relatives were to marry a person of a different racial, ethnic, national or religious background. We found that 61.3% of respondents reported concerns about marriage to a Muslim person, which was the highest rate of inter-marriage concern across groups. This reflects national trends which reveal how Islamophobia remains a dominant out-group sentiment in Australia (Table 5). This was followed by marriage concerns relating to people from a Middle Eastern background (51%), African background (48%), Jewish faith (46.4%), Aboriginal background (41.9%), Indian, Pakistani or Sri Lankan backgrounds (40.2%), and other Asian backgrounds (37.4%).

The lowest rates of concern related to marrying a person of a Christian faith (29.6%), Italian background (26.1%) and British background (22.7%). Intermarriage concern rates in the current study were generally higher relative to national studies (Blair et al., 2017: 12-13; Dunn et al., 2020), except for persons from a Muslim faith, Middle Eastern background, and Indian, Pakistani or Sri Lanka background (see Table 5). Intermarriage concerns in the current survey were higher in relation to African, Jewish and Aboriginal Australians. The rates of participants who were 'very concerned' about intermarriage are especially notable since they are particularly high in the current survey compared with Dunn et al. (2020), where they varied from 1.8% to 10.4%. Note that these cross-survey differences have yet to be tested statistically.

Table 5. Concerns about intermarriage, Victorians, 2020-2021

In your opinion, how concerned would you feel if one of your closest relatives were to marry a person of ...	Not at all concerned (%) current survey	Any concern (%) current survey	Any concern (%) (Dunn et al., 2020)	Any concern (%) (Blair et al., 2017)
Muslim Faith	38.7	61.3	56	63.1
Middle Eastern background	49	51	47	51.4
African background	52	48	46.1	43.9
Jewish Faith	53.6	46.4	41.4	40.1
Aboriginal background	58.1	41.9	36.5	36.2
Indian, Pakistani or Sri Lanka background	59.8	40.2	40.6	38.4
Other Asian backgrounds	62.6	37.4	33.7	29.6
Christian Faith	70.4	29.6	25.1	22.7
Italian background	73.9	26.1	19.2	18.4
British background	77.3	22.7	16.6	15.9

3.5. Everyday anti-racism

We found high levels of agreement with statements about anti-racism (Table 6). About four in five respondents (82%) agreed that ‘a person’s race has nothing to do with how I relate to them’, and 70.1% said that they challenge or check themselves before saying anything that can be considered racist. Just 64.3% agreed that they get upset if they hear racist comments about any cultural group, but only 10% would not be upset by hearing racist comments, leaving a quarter unsure. Economically, the 10% who are not concerned about racism are a group for whom instruction on pro-social benefit and tactics might not have much ‘return on investment’. However, the 64% who are upset by racism, and the quarter who are unsure, are a significant cohort in cultivating anti-racism.

Bystander anti-racism varied along grades of affinity with the perpetrator and victim, and respondents were more likely to take action against racist talk as affinity increased. This corroborates findings on pro-sociality (see the review by Nelson et al., 2011). About two thirds (65.7%) of respondents said they interrupt racist conversations when they hear them in their family, and 60.8% agreed with a similar statement about interrupting racist conversations by their friends. Fewer respondents reported interrupting such conversations at their workplace (52.6%). Another statement, about confronting people who tell racist jokes was agreed with by only 44.3% of respondents. Two other statements focused on defending people who are targeted by racism, which varied by affinity as well: 70.6% reported normally defending a friend who is the target of a racial joke, while only about a half (49.6%) reported normally defending the person targeted by such a joke when they were strangers. International research has consistently found that social distance from the person under threat has a negative association with actual pro-social action to defend them if targeted (Nelson et al., 2011). Lifting the expectation that ordinary people take pro-social action to assist people not from their immediate orbit of relations is a key way forward for lifting everyday anti-racist effort.

Finally, respondents had limited involvement in collective prosocial action. Just under half (48.1%) reported speaking to their friends about what they can do about racism and discrimination and less than two in five respondents (38.7%) said they join others who get together to challenge discrimination. Finally, about a third (33.8%) said they had joined community groups or organisations that promote diversity. About a third neither agreed or disagreed with these propositions. Through this non-committal cohort there is strong scope to lift Victorians’ participation in such anti-racism.



“ Bystander anti-racism varied along grades of affinity with the perpetrator and victim, and respondents were more likely to take action against racist talk as affinity increased. ”

Table 6. Everyday anti-racism, Victorians, 2020-2021

Statement	Agreement (agree or strongly agree (%))	Neither agree or disagree (%)	Disagreement (disagree or strongly disagree (%))
Anti-racist disposition			
A person's race has nothing to do with how I relate to them	82	12.8	5.3
I challenge or check myself before I say anything racist	70.1	22.6	7.3
I get upset if I hear racist comments about any cultural group	64.3	25.7	10
Bystander anti-racism			
I normally defend a friend who is the target of a racial joke	70.6	23.4	6
I interrupt racist conversations when I hear them in my family	65.7	24.3	10.1
I interrupt racist conversations when I hear my friends talking that way	60.8	27.9	11.3
I interrupt racist conversations when I hear them in my workplace	52.6	36.1	11.2
I normally defend a stranger who is the target of a racial joke	49.6	38.4	12
When I hear people telling racist jokes, I usually confront them	44.3	36	19.7
Collective action			
D10. I speak to my friends about the problem of racism and discrimination, and what we can do about it	48.1	32.6	19.4
D11. I join others who get together to challenge discrimination	38.7	36.5	24.8
D12. I join community groups or organisations that promote diversity	33.8	35.6	30.6



Part 4. Findings: bivariate associations

We conducted bivariate analyses to test the relationships between participant demographics and the different statements (results available upon request). We found consistent links between certain demographics and pro-social attitudes, engagement in intercultural interaction, TVE practices, and everyday anti-racism. Higher agreement with these statements was generally associated with residence in metropolitan areas, younger age groups, being born overseas, higher education, being employed, and higher income. These associations are not unexpected, given that those variables are associated with stronger anti-racism literacy, and opportunity for TVE work and pro-sociality. These statements were also generally associated with being Indigenous, except for prosocial attitudes and interactions which were more mixed. Likewise, while people who spoke a LOTE at home agreed more with the vast majority of these statements. They reported lower agreement than English speakers in relation to trusting people who do not share their cultural background (although not their religion), interacting with Indigenous people, and accepting living near a mosque. These variations in trust may be linked to variations in the experience of racism, which is a negative form of cross-cultural encounter.

We found more mixed results for gender and religion in relation to these three scales. Females were more likely to agree with most statements about prosocial attitudes and reported consistently more involvement in antiracism. They also reported higher levels of trust and learning new things when with people from different cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, more males felt like they could develop a romantic relationship cross-culturally. And while females were more likely to engage in some TVE activities like sharing food, meeting new people, and going out of their way to make people from different cultures feel welcome, males reported greater involvement in practices such as making introductions, greeting, consulting colleagues, looking for opportunities to interact, and serving as a bridge between people.

These may reflect traditional gender roles and confidence in different settings, and points to how the encouragement of pro-sociality across gender could be best leveraged.

We examined differences between three groups of participants: those who identified as not religious, as Christian, and as religious and non-Christian (including Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist). Religious non-Christians generally reported more prosocial attitudes, and greater engagement in intercultural interaction, TVE practices, and everyday anti-racism. Some of the most pronounced differences were with regard to TVE practices, particularly between religious non-Christians and non-religious people, especially in greeting people, looking for opportunities to interact, inviting people to do things together, serving as a bridge and exchanging small things like food and gifts. Religious non-Christians were much more likely to report these actions compared with non-religious people, with 20 per cent or more reporting them among religious non-Christians. Anti-racism engagement among religious non-Christians was higher than the other two groups, especially with regard to speaking with friends about racism as a problem, joining

“ Females were more likely to agree with most statements about prosocial attitudes and reported consistently more involvement in antiracism.”

people who get together to challenge discrimination, and joining groups/organisations that promote diversity. They were also much more likely than the other groups to participate in mixed cultural events. The greater preparedness of religious non-Christians for cross-cultural interaction should be examined to understand the motivations and tactics behind this difference, and lift anti-racism among Christians and the non-religious.

Experiences of racism were more commonly reported by metropolitan residents, males, younger people (often with a drop in rates from ages 45-54), Indigenous people, people born overseas (except for racism in domestic settings), people who speak at home a LOTE, and people who are religious non-Christians. Experiencing racism was also more commonly reported by respondents with higher education, higher income, and people who were employed. The finding that higher rates were reported by Indigenous people, people born overseas, people speaking LOTE at home and males, has been found in previous research in Australia (Blair et al., 2017: 10).

Concerns about inter-marriage were more commonly reported by metropolitan residents, males, Indigenous peoples, respondents with higher education, participants who were employed, and those with higher income (especially when earning \$100k+). These are consistent with other research about intercultural and interfaith attitudes in Australia (Mansouri, 2020; 2021). There were also several differences between age groups, and particularly higher concerns among respondents aged 35-44. In comparing concern rates based on country of birth, concerns were greater among participants born overseas than those born in Australia. This may again reflect experiences, including negative cross-cultural experiences outside of and in Australia. Further analysis examining participants' generation of migration shows that second generation migrants (born in Australia to one or two parent/s from overseas) were less concerned about intermarriage compared both with first generation migrants and with participants born in Australia to Australian-born parents (while concern rates were generally similar between the latter groups). Religious non-Christians reported the highest concern rates, followed by Christians, while non-religious people reported the lowest concerns. Finally, concerns were higher among participants speaking a LOTE at home.



“ Experiences of racism were more commonly reported by metropolitan residents, males, younger people, Indigenous people, people born overseas, people who speak at home a LOTE, and people who are religious non-Christians. ”



Part 5. Conclusion and implications

5.1. Key findings

This large-scale survey of the Victorian adult population found overall favourable attitudes towards intercultural contact. A large majority of the respondents reported enjoying different kinds of contact, readiness to meet people from different cultural backgrounds, and comfort and confidence in socialising interculturally. When framed in broad terms, intercultural interaction and learning were also pervasive. Less than five per cent of respondents declared not engaging with cultural difference. Likewise, participants widely agreed that they related to other people irrespective of their racial backgrounds. These are encouraging findings that speak to considerable exposure to and embrace of cultural diversity in daily life and positive experiences with lived realities of multiculturalism in Victoria. They support research that indicates that the majority of Australians hold positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and migrants (e.g., Kamp et al., 2018; O'Donnell, 2023), and that intercultural interaction is indeed commonplace (e.g., Wickes et al., 2020). Given the exceptionally challenging time when the research was conducted, in the context of COVID-19 and shortly after the extensive lockdown of 2020 in Victoria, these findings also speak to pockets of strength and an underlying resilience that exist within Victorian society. There remains, however, scope to enhance anti-racism action, as shown by the gap between ambition and action. One of the biggest limits on prosocial anti-racism is knowledge of what action to take (Nelson et al., 2011).

Victorians can do better with regard to several important areas examined in this research. While prosocial attitudes and intercultural interaction were reported to be high in general, support for more specific kinds of interaction and prosocial actions was more limited. For example, while readiness for and enjoyment of contact were widespread and everyday interaction pervasive, long-term friendships across cultural difference were far less common, and many participants did

not feel like they could develop a romantic relationship or had widespread concerns about intermarriage of a relative, suggesting many were uncomfortable with romantic relationships across cultural lines. Given we know that prejudice reduction is optimised where meaningful contact is present, such as voluntary engagement, repeated interactions, equality and cooperation (Paolini et al. 2021; Pettigrew and Tropp 2002; Vrij and Smith 1999), these findings suggest more work needs to be done to create the conditions for more meaningful and deeper intercultural relations. About 15 to 20% of Victorians are both positive about engaging with diversity but also set limits to the degree of engagement they would embrace. This reduces the rate of those supportive of cultural interaction from three-quarters to close to just over a half. Since the quality and durability of contact are significant to improving intergroup relations and reducing prejudice (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Davies et al., 2011), the question of what limits the creation and growth of such closer and possibly more intimate intercultural relationships in Victoria, may carry wider implications for Victorians' abilities to live and connect more strongly amid cultural difference.

“ While prosocial attitudes and intercultural interaction were reported to be high in general, support for more specific kinds of interaction and prosocial actions was more limited. ”

“ Another area that requires improvement relates to findings on the high rates of racism and on rates of (mis)trust.

We also found that actual involvement in transversal-enabler practices was less common than it could be. As discussed earlier, this may be expected, given the unique resources and personal skills and dispositions required for facilitating contact (Jezewski & Sotnik 2001; Turner & Cameron, 2016; Wise, 2009). Certain practices were less common, such as looking out for people from other cultural backgrounds, looking for opportunities to interact, inviting people home or to do things together and exchanging small things like food and gifts. Unsurprisingly, ‘serving as a bridge’, a high-level construct that goes to the core of TVE practice, was the least commonly reported in our survey. From these findings we assert that just over half of Victorians have higher level of involvement in pro-sociality and transversal enabling. While one-in-ten disagree with any such ambition, over a third are unsure. This one-third ought to be a focus for raising awareness of the benefits of transversal action. Encouraging Victorians to support the more ambitious forms of transversal-enabling also requires action.

Another area that requires improvement relates to findings on the high rates of racism and on rates of (mis)trust. Participants reported low levels of trust towards people from different cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as feeling that others may not trust them due to their own cultural and religious background. This links to disconcerting findings about widespread experiences of discrimination, which were generally more common compared with findings from a previous national survey (Blair et al., 2017) and has some similarities to more recent research during COVID-19 (Kamp et al., 2021). The current survey did not specify a timeframe for such experiences, which makes it difficult to determine to what extent such reports may relate to experiences under lockdown or during the early months of the

COVID-19 outbreak. Our findings regarding the high concerns about intermarriage with some groups add to this negative picture, and so do unfavourable results on other indicators of deeper commitment to connecting beyond cultural difference. Only one-in-two Victorian respondents were prepared to live next to a mosque, which aligns with the high concern about marriage to Muslims and is consistent with previous research on Islamophobia (e.g., Dunn et al., 2020). These point to some of the urgent areas for anti-racist attention, as outlined by other CRIS and Challenging Racism Project (CRP) work.

Our assessment of anti-racism is consistent with other findings about the limits of social action, suggesting that anti-racism action varies with affinity, and was more likely when confronting a perpetrator or defending a target of discrimination who were connected to the respondent (as a family member or a friend, rather than a stranger) (Nelson et al., 2011). While there was a high-level of support for transversal enabling (TVE) (85%), there was a lesser likelihood to make an effort to do so (45-60%), and even less reporting they had become a TVE (34%). Participation in collective action was the least common, which is problematic for challenging deeper structures of oppression. Again, challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic to attending events in physical environments are important to take into consideration and may have affected these findings.

Gaps between attitudes and action are also evident in the recent voting at the Voice referendum. Following the referendum, we have seen debates on whether the majority of Australians are racist. As discussed earlier, only a minority of Victorians supported the Voice, which would place most Victorians at the end of such critique. However, the data we have suggest that some who likely voted against the referendum may still, for example, ‘get upset when they hear racist comments’, or ‘normally defend a friend who is the target of a racial joke’. While it is possible that attitudes have shifted (turning more negative) in the three years between our survey and the referendum, these gaps seem to point to further complexity, regarding disparities between attitudes and incongruent action, and in how Victorians understand racism (with a ‘No’ vote on the Voice not associated with racism). These areas should be further tested by subsequent research.

As to demographic variabilities in our findings, prosocial attitudes and interaction as well as anti-racism were consistently higher among people residing in metropolitan areas, younger age groups, people born overseas, and people who

hold higher education, are employed, and earn a higher income (with more mixed findings based on age, sex, and indigeneity). These results allow us to target future intervention towards fairly defined groups, as we discuss next. For example, there are gender variations across different types of anti-racist action, which may be leveraged in role model campaigns.

5.2. Implications for policy and practice

We have suggested that Victorians can do better on everyday pro-sociality and anti-racism, but how might they do so? We now discuss how insights from this research may be used to inform anti-racism practice, programs and policy, propel action and activate the Victorian population. Existing strengths, such as a predisposition to and familiarity with contact, readiness to meet new people, enjoying contact, and existing practices of learning, may help to expand intercultural interaction. They may be leveraged, for instance, by creating further opportunities for durable and richer encounters, or creating everyday settings and situations where people may come together to learn something new or collaborate, with new people from different cultural backgrounds to their own. Too few respondents reported interactions with Indigenous people (49.6%). Lifting the scope for such interaction will be important in challenging stereotypes and misinformation about Indigenous Australians, and the project of truth telling needs Australians to hear non-Indigenous peoples' stories of colonialism and its ongoing effects.

There is also a need for pragmatic interventions in the context of systemic racism. These may be 'top-down', for example, via policies, programs and campaigns to affect individuals, as well as 'bottom-up', when enough people in a given locality are propelled to change their behaviour and speak up against racism, making it possible to affect norms in these settings and catalyse structural effect. Indeed, the repeated proscription of racism in a given setting holds out the possibility of a change to norms in that place and / or community (Nelson et al., 2011). In this way, interpersonal anti-racism action can have structural-like effects. Everyday anti-racism practices, such as bystander action, can and should be more widely taken up, and may be promoted and taught through programs and campaigns. The increased likelihood of defending relatives and friends who experience racism, or confronting them when they perpetrate it, may be used as springboards to propel Victorians to act, possibly starting from their closer social circles

***“ There is a need to lift the expectation that ordinary people take pro-social action to assist people not from their immediate orbit of relations, and the extraordinary benefit of such action needs to be made visible.*”**

before extending actions within wider social space. Findings about affinity also point us to the already established significance of empathy in anti-racism work (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2017; Pedersen et al., 2011), and ways in which it could be cleverly and effectively evolved through intervention. There is a need to lift the expectation that ordinary people take pro-social action to assist people not from their immediate orbit of relations, and the extraordinary benefit of such action needs to be made visible. We also recommend that effective practice, in line with previous research and policy documents (Dunn et al., 2020; 2021), will draw on geographic and demographic variations in daily practices to target particular groups and localities to enhance pro-sociality and tackle racism.

Further action may focus on specific social groups, particularly those already involved in anti-racism initiatives who may be more readily activated in supporting and advocating for the next generation of initiatives and play a greater role in encouraging prosocial action and contesting anti-racism. Further engaging them may require less resources and thus have the greatest 'return on investment'. Any such engagement should start from extensive consultation and be co-designed with respective groups. The decision of which groups to focus on may be informed by our findings on variations in the propensity for everyday anti-racism across demographic categories, with higher propensity generally associated with residence in metropolitan areas, younger age groups, being born overseas, higher education, being employed, and higher income.

5.3. Further research

The results presented here point to new directions for further analysis and subsequent research. The survey provides a snapshot of pro-sociality and anti-racism in the unique context of COVID-19. Questions about trust, predisposition towards anti-racism, and the extent of prosocial action, are worth revisiting in the current climate, and can lend themselves to time-series assessment. There is increased recognition of racism as ‘a big problem in Australia’ in recent Mapping Social Cohesion surveys, from 40% in 2020, to 60% in 2021 and 2022 (O’Donnell, 2022: 69). It would be useful to examine changes to anti-racism dispositions after our initial research, in a world recovering from the pandemic.

Our findings on the low levels of trust towards people from cultural and religious backgrounds different to participants’, and on distrust as a pervasive form of racism, call for further research on the role of trust in intercultural relations. Trust may be a prerequisite to other forms of deeper pro-sociality, while compromised trust may negatively affect the likelihood of transversal enabler practices. The absence of a timeframe in our assessment of trust makes it hard to determine the extent to which these results were affected by pandemic restrictions. Further research should establish the prevalence of trust post-pandemic using specified timeframes (e.g., the past 12 months), comparing it to pandemic and pre-pandemic trust levels.

Using a similar methodological approach to Dunn et al. (2021; 2022), segmentation analysis can further explore the data at hand and how pro-sociality, anti-racism and TVE action may be taken up across distinct segments of the Victorian population. This would assist in typifying approaches to anti-racism, discerning between groups based on their dispositions and actions, and offer practical, customised approaches to enhancing anti-racist practice.

The discussion of limitations to engaging in closer intercultural relationships points to further research needed on the gap between positive dispositions towards diversity and intercultural contact and actual intercultural engagement. The gap between widespread prosocial attitudes that embrace diversity and high dispositions to act on it (for example readiness to meet new people) and the much more limited transversal enabler initiative and interaction raises questions about factors that limit pro-sociality and deeper engagement, including opportunities for such contact, and levels

of interest and comfort. Here we might ask, what are the reasons for inaction, and why does that vary? For example, why do the religious non-Christians have higher rates of pro-sociality, intercultural interaction, TVE practice and support for everyday anti-racism? Follow up survey-based research, or qualitative work, may also probe into the conditions for closer connections, to better understand their limitations among nearly a fifth of Victorians.

The survey may also be used in developing new scales to measure pro-social attitudes and interaction, TVE dispositions and action, and everyday anti-racism action. To date, the capacities of transversal enablers to create intercultural connections and bridges has mostly been examined through qualitative research. A TVE scale could test the tentative components we have proposed here (i.e., dispositions and actions), alongside areas such as skills, knowledge and recognition. Its testing and validation will enhance empirical and conceptual work in this area. The current survey should also inform the creation of tools to measure everyday anti-racism. While there are several instruments measuring anti-racism (e.g., Aldana et al., 2019; Paradies et al., 2013; Pieterse et al., 2016), everyday anti-racist practices are rarely measured quantitatively, let alone using valid, quality tools.

Finally, follow-up surveys with Victorians over time, and possibly with the wider Australian population, would reveal how common these instances of pro-sociality and anti-racism are in a post-pandemic, post-Voice Australia. Such a survey should include specific items to gauge the role of significant recent events in shaping Victorians’ anti-racism, including the COVID-19 pandemic, BLM, ALM, and the Voice referendum. Engaging with the latter would allow a better interpretation of the referendum’s results and understanding the place of racism (versus other factors, e.g., concept was too abstract, the proposition was poorly worded, a badly conceived YES campaign) in shaping voting patterns.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A: Research team bios

Professor Kevin Dunn is Provost at Western Sydney University. His research focuses on anti-racism innovation and evaluation, measuring and mapping racism and Islamophobia in Australia.

Dr Jehonathan Ben is a Research Fellow at Western Sydney University and Deakin University. His research focuses on racism and anti-racism, intercultural relations, migration and mobilities..

Dr Rachel Sharples is a Sociologist and Lecturer in Social Sciences at Western Sydney University. Her research interests include displaced persons, refugees and migrants in local and global settings; statelessness, citizenship and belonging; racism and anti-racism; and spaces of solidarity and resistance.

Dr Amanuel Elias is a Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute, Deakin University. He is an economist, and his research focuses on racism, discrimination, inequality, and cultural diversity.

Nida Denson is an Associate Professor at Western Sydney University. Her research aims to combat racism and discrimination, and to improve the health and wellbeing of marginalised groups.

Deakin Distinguished **Professor Fethi Mansouri** holds the UNESCO Chair for comparative research on cultural diversity and social justice (2013-) and is the founding Director of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (ADI) at Deakin University.

Professor Craig McGarty is a social and political psychologist whose main work is on intergroup relations especially social identity, collective action, group-based emotions and stereotype formation.

Professor Yin Paradies is a Wakaya man and Chair in Race Relations at Deakin University. He conducts research on the health, social and economic effects of racism, anti-racism theory, policy and practice as well as Indigenous knowledges and decolonisation.

Dr Öznur Şahin is an Associate Lecturer in Geography and Urban Studies at Western Sydney University. Her research focuses on the spatial dynamics of politics and gender, spatial justice and diversity, and racism and anti-racism.

Appendix B: Survey items and sources

Section A – Pro-social action	Question Source
A1. I interact with people who have a different cultural background to me	Enfield & Nathaniel 2013
A2. I participate in cultural events with people from different cultural backgrounds	Priest et al., 2019
A3. I learn new things when I am with people from different cultural backgrounds	Priest et al., 2019
A4. I feel I could develop a romantic relationship with someone from a different cultural group	Callander et al., 2015
A5. I have a long-term friendship with a person from a different cultural background to me	Olson & Kroeger 2001
A6. I enjoy being around people from different cultural backgrounds	Priest et al., 2019
A7. I like meeting and getting to know people from different cultural backgrounds	Priest et al., 2019
A8. I enjoy exchanging ideas with people from different cultures	Cleveland et al. 2014
A9. I feel self-confident and comfortable socialising with people from different cultural backgrounds	Olson & Kroeger 2001
A10. I feel more comfortable with people who are open to people from different cultural backgrounds	Arasaratnam 2009
A11. I trust people of different religious beliefs	Enfield & Nathaniel 2013
A12. I trust people who don't share my cultural background	Enfield & Nathaniel 2013
A13. I don't like to be with people from different cultural backgrounds (reverse-coded)	Chen & Starosta, 2000
A14. I interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Barlow et al 2009
A15. I would accept living near a mosque	Mansouri and Vergani 2018

Appendix B: Survey items and sources

Section B – Cross-cultural contact	Question Source
B1. I'm always ready to meet new people from different cultures	Simonsen & Koefoed 2020
B2. I usually introduce myself to new people from different cultures	Wise 2009
B3. It is common for me to greet people from different cultures whom I don't know	Wise 2005
B4. I look for opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds	Arasaratnam 2009
B5. I invite people from other cultures to do things together	Wise 2005
B6. I invite people from other cultures to my home	Wise 2009
B7. I go out of my way to make people from different cultures feel welcome	Wise 2009
B8. I look out for people from other cultural backgrounds	Noble 2009
B9. I serve as a bridge between people of different cultures	Olson & Kroeger 2001
B10. I share my knowledge about things like shopping, schools and local services with people	Wise 2009
B11. I have never shared my food with people from different cultural groups	Noble 2009; Wise 2009
B12. At work, I often consult colleagues from different cultural backgrounds	Noble 2009
B13. I exchange small things like food and gifts with people from different cultural backgrounds who live near me	Wise 2005

Appendix B: Survey items and sources

Section C – Experiences with racism	Question Source
C1. How often do you feel that because of your cultural or religious background... People act as if you are not to be trusted	CRP national survey*
C2. How often do you feel that because of your cultural or religious background... You are called names or similarly insulted	CRP national survey
C3. How often do you feel that because of your cultural or religious background... You are treated less respectfully	CRP national survey
C4. How often have YOU experienced discrimination because of your cultural or religious background in the following situations?	
(1) in the workplace	CRP national survey
(2) in an educational institution	CRP national survey
(3) when renting or buying a house	CRP national survey
(4) in any dealings with the police and court system	CRP national survey
(5) at a shop or restaurant	CRP national survey
(6) at a sporting event	CRP national survey
7) on public transport on in the street	CRP national survey
(8) in seeking healthcare	CRP national survey
(9) online	CRP national survey
(10) at home	CRP national survey
(11) at a friend/family members' home	CRP national survey
C5. In your opinion, how concerned would you feel if one of your closest relatives were to marry a person of...'	
(1) Indian, Pakistani or Sri Lankan backgrounds	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(2) Other Asian backgrounds	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(3) Aboriginal background	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(4) Italian background	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(5) British background	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(6) African background	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(7) Middle Eastern background	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(8) Muslim Faith	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(9) Jewish Faith	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]
(10) Christian Faith	CRP national survey [Bogardus scale]

* See Blair et al. (2017); Dunn et al. (2018).

Appendix B: Survey items and sources

Section D – Everyday anti-racism	Question Source
D1. A person's race has nothing to do with how I relate to them	Paradies et al 2013
D2. I challenge or check myself before I say anything racist	Aldana et al., 2019
D3. I interrupt racist conversations when I hear them in my workplace	Aldana et al., 2019; Pieterse et al., 2016
D4. I interrupt racist conversations when I hear my friends talking that way	Pieterse et al., 2016
D5. I interrupt racist conversations when I hear them in my family	Pieterse et al., 2016
D6. I get upset if I hear racist comments about any cultural group	Grigg & Manderson, 2016
D7. When I hear people telling racist jokes, I usually confront them	Pieterse et al., 2016
D8. I normally defend a friend who is the target of a racial joke	Aldana et al., 2019
D9. I normally defend a stranger who is the target of a racial joke	Aldana et al., 2019
D10. I speak to my friends about the problem of racism and discrimination, and what we can do about it	Aldana et al., 2019; Pieterse et al., 2016
D11. I join others who get together to challenge discrimination	Gurin et al 2013
D12. I join community groups or organisations that promote diversity	Gurin et al 2013

Appendix B: Survey items and sources

Section E – Demographics	Question Source
E1. What is your age?	CRP National Survey
E2. Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	CRP National Survey
E3. Which of the following best describes your gender identity?	SBS Diversity project survey (unpublished as yet)
E4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	CRP National Survey
E5. Which of the following best describes your employment status?	CRP National Survey
E6. What is your personal annual income, before tax?	SBS Diversity project survey (unpublished as yet)
E7. In which country were you born?	CRP National Survey
E8. Was your mother born in Australia?	CRP National Survey
E9. Was your father born in Australia?	CRP National Survey
E10. What is the main language spoken at your home?	CRP National Survey
E11. What best describes your family background?	CRP National Survey
E12. What is your religion?	CRP National Survey
E13. What is your postcode?	CRP National Survey

Appendix C: Acronyms

AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
ALM	All Lives Matter
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
BLM	Black Lives Matter
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRIS	Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies
CRP	Challenging Racism Project
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IBM	International Business Machines
LGA	Local Government Area
LOTE	Languages Other than English
RCOA	Refugee Council of Australia
SBS	Special Broadcasting Services
SOAR	Speak Out Against Racism
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TVE	Transversal Enabler
VEOHRC	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
WVS	World Values Survey



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