

**Community  
Profiles of  
Hate Crime and  
Hate Incidents  
in Australia  
2022**



Hate is harmful. It can motivate crime, drive verbal abuse and prompt denigrating behaviour. Hate crime erodes people's sense of safety. It sends a message to targeted communities, and individuals, that they are not welcome. Hate crime undermines equality, diversity, human rights, and social cohesion.

Hate crime is often not well understood by the general community. Many people are not aware of how hate crime manifests or how it impacts various targeted communities.

This briefing paper is the first in Australia to bring together current data on the experiences of hate crime and hate incidents amongst some of Australia's most targeted communities.

The paper is designed to promote awareness about the nature of this problem and its harmful impact upon different communities. Only with this knowledge can we hope to develop effective responses.

This briefing paper includes stories that may be confronting or distressing to some readers.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this paper may contain images and names of people who have died.**



The AHCN acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the original violence and dispossession enacted at colonisation and the subsequent prejudice, brutality and injustice against Australia's First Nations Peoples.

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# Contents

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The Australian Hate Crime Network.....	pg 4
Purpose .....	pg 5
Hate Crime and Hate Incidents: A Description.....	pg 6
Who is affected by Hate Crime?.....	pg 7
The impact of Hate Crime.....	pg 8
Selected Targeted Communities:	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.....	pg 9
Asian Communities.....	pg 13
Disability Communities.....	pg 17
Jewish Community.....	pg 21
Muslim Communities.....	pg 25
Sexuality and Gender Diverse Communities.....	pg 29
Women.....	pg 33
Endnotes.....	pg 38



## The Australian Hate Crime Network

This briefing paper is produced by the Australian Hate Crime Network (AHCN).<sup>1</sup> The AHCN is a partnership of community organisations, academics and government agencies working to develop priorities and outcomes that address hate crime and hate incidents in Australia. It aims to improve understanding, reduce prevalence and minimise the impact of hate crime and hate incidents. The AHCN has members across Australia.

Many members of the AHCN have contributed to this paper. Each community section has been written and/or reviewed by a member of that community. The AHCN thanks all contributors for their invaluable input.

Please feel free to quote this document, in part or full, provided the work is attributed to the Australian Hate Crime Network (2022).

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*This document represents the views of non-government and academic members of the AHCN. It does not represent the views of representatives of any government agency or department associated with the AHCN.*



## Purpose

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This paper is designed to provide information about the experiences of a range of communities that are targeted for hate crime and hate incidents in Australia. It brings together published research and available data on different forms of hate crime and hate incidents.

Targeted communities may face different forms of hateful conduct or experience different intensities of hate. For example, the issues facing First Nations peoples will not be the same as the issues facing Asian communities. These issues can also vary over time.

Yet, there are commonalities in the experiences of communities most vulnerable to hate. At the heart of all hateful conduct is intolerance, disrespect and hostility towards those who are, or are perceived to be, different. All hate crime and hate incidents breach human rights and deny human dignity. All demand a co-ordinated policy, law enforcement, educational and community response.

In this paper, we focus only on those forms of hate crime and hate incidents where there is sufficient published research and data to create a reliable picture of the problem. We do not suggest that hate crime targeting other minority communities (such as violence against homeless people) is not important. It simply means that we need more research on the hate faced by these communities.

The data we present here has been published by a variety of organisations, each using different methods and criteria to collect and categorise the data. Therefore, comparisons cannot be drawn between the number of incidents reported by different communities.

***All hate crime and hate incidents breach human rights and deny human dignity.***

***All demand a co-ordinated policy, law enforcement, educational and community response.***

# Hate Crime and Hate Incidents

## A Description

Hate crime is an act that is against the criminal law and is motivated, in whole or in part, by bias, prejudice or hatred towards a group characteristic of the victim. This includes bias on the grounds of race, religion, ethnic/national origin, sexuality, disability, gender identity, gender, age or being homeless. Hate crime is also referred to as targeted crime, bias crime or prejudice-motivated crime. An example of a hate crime is vandalising a religious institution because the perpetrator has strong feelings of hostility towards people who follow that particular religion.

Hate incidents are other acts that are motivated, in whole or in part, by bias, prejudice or hatred towards a group characteristic of the victim but that do not amount to a breach of the criminal law.

These incidents tend to be less serious but may breach some other law, such as civil vilification law, and can sometimes be reported to a human rights agency. Some hate incidents may not be illegal at all. Whether an incident is illegal varies from state to state. An example of a hate incident is insulting someone because of their disability.

Hate crime and hate incidents range from mass-murder and physical assault through to property damage, verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, speech that incites violence or hatred, threats of violence, graffiti, and hate literature (e.g. posters and stickers).

While some hate crime involves extreme violence, much involves less severe acts, such as verbal abuse, graffiti or harassment. Members of minority communities are often targeted for hate crime or hate incidents when they are going about their daily lives, such as walking along the

street, shopping, travelling on public transport, or in the vicinity of their communal facilities. Some communities experience this hate regularly.

A lot of hate is expressed and promoted online. This can include offensive language, intimidation through bullying and trolling, threats of harm, doxxing and the incitement of violence. Although these forms of hate occur through a screen rather than face to face, they can still create fear and anxiety for the targeted person or their community.

Even everyday or 'micro' forms of abuse need to be taken seriously. Their ongoing impact over time can be devastating.

# Who is affected by Hate Crime?

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Minority communities are the main targets of hate crime and hate incidents in Australia. For example, people may be targeted for abuse because of their sexuality, because they are homeless or because they come from a minority ethnic community.

Different forms of prejudice or hate can interact with each other. For example, a Muslim woman may experience hate crime both because she is Muslim and a woman. This means that some people may be targeted more frequently or experience it more intensely due to having more than one attribute that makes them vulnerable; for example, a Jewish man who is gay or an Aboriginal woman who is elderly.

***Visibility often plays a role in hate crime as some victims are easily identified and targeted because they look visibly different, such as people whose skin colour is not 'white', people with an identifiable impairment, or people who wear religious or ethnic clothing.***

Some individuals and groups who target one group, such as Muslims, may also target Jewish or sexuality and gender diverse communities, as well as people of Asian and African ethnicity. Although minority communities are the primary targets of hateful conduct, hate motivated behaviour can be committed by a member of a minority

community against a member of the majority community or against a member of another minority community.

Hate crime and hate incidents are under-reported to police, human rights agencies and community organisations. Some victims are unsure whether it is worth reporting an incident, for various reasons, or do not trust authorities to take the matter seriously if they do report. Only some forms of hate crime have been the focus of sustained research or data collection. This makes it difficult to know the full extent of the problem in Australia.

## The impact of Hate Crime

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Hate crime affects the individual who is targeted, their community and Australian society. Individuals report feelings of depression, anxiety, anger, fear and intimidation, as well as diminished self-esteem and alienation from the wider community.<sup>2</sup> The cumulative effect of experiencing hateful conduct over time can exacerbate these feelings. This means that even less serious, everyday or micro incidents can cause harm, whether they are 'on the streets' or online.

Hate crime sends a message to the targeted community that they are unwelcome and unsafe. This can cause members of that community to modify their behaviour, avoid certain places and people, or develop strategies to keep themselves safe. For example, people may avoid speaking their first language in public if it is not English, displaying religious symbols, travelling outside their neighbourhood, or holding hands with their same-sex partner in public.

When one community is made to feel unwelcome or blocked from full participation in public life, it is a problem for us all. Hate crime and hate incidents undermine human dignity, equality and respect for diversity. This makes it a serious concern for every Australian.

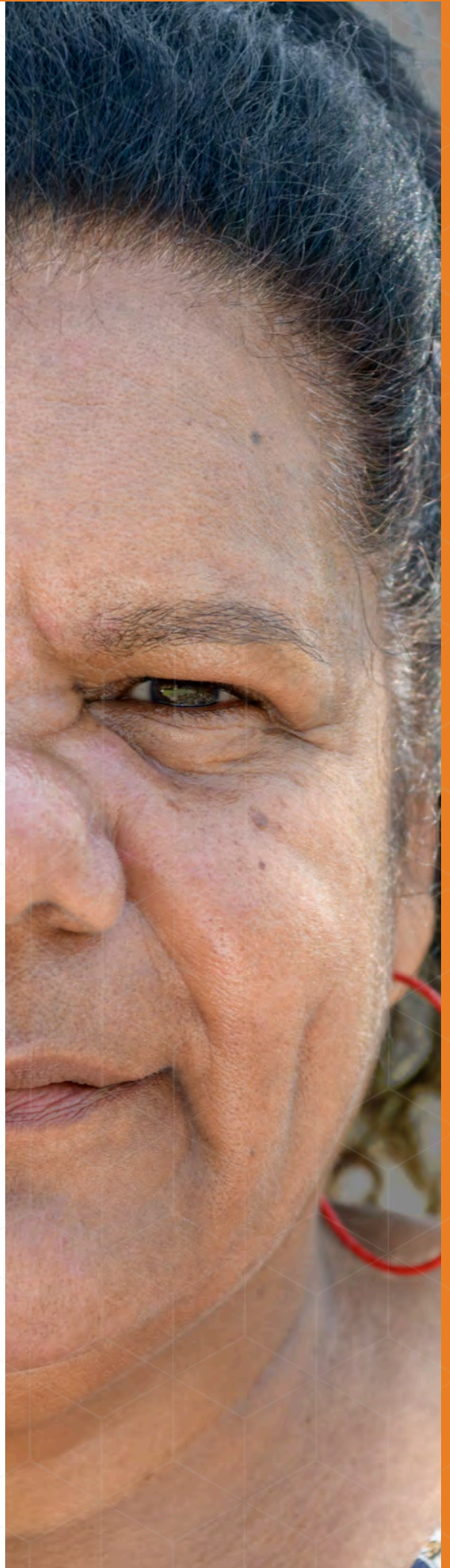




# 01

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first peoples of Australia. They are made up of the many nations who occupied the Australian continent under their own laws and customs for thousands of years before colonisation. They are also known as First Nations peoples or Indigenous Australians.*



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Context

Hate crime against First Nations peoples occurs because of racism, which denigrates and disrespects Indigenous culture, language, law and people. It can be traced back to colonisation in 1788 by the British who relied upon the legal doctrine of terra nullius to claim that the land of Australia belonged to no one. They effectively took the land without consent of its rightful custodians and owners, the Indigenous people,<sup>3</sup> and without a treaty.

In 2016, there were 798,400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in Australia (i.e. 3% of the Australian population). Three quarters live in NSW, Qld and WA combined. The median age of the Indigenous population is 20.3 years, compared to the median age for the non-Indigenous population, which is 37.8 years. The Indigenous population increased by 19% during 2011-2016.<sup>4</sup>

With the invasion of the British, First Nations people lost their lands, and in some cases much of their culture. Aboriginal peoples actively resisted British invasion but were systematically killed in the Frontier Wars, which attempted to eradicate that resistance. White pastoralists, police and military were involved in these killings. Massacres were common.<sup>5</sup> Many Aboriginal people also died from disease or poison. The population was decimated by colonisation.

For many years, there were policies, laws and practices that controlled and discriminated against Aboriginal people. First Nations people were forced to leave their homes to live on missions and reserves. Indigenous children, including those of 'mixed descent', were forcibly taken from their families by governments and churches in a policy of assimilation (known as the Stolen Generations).

Aboriginal people were exploited for their labour, segregated from non-Aboriginal people in some regions and most were denied citizenship with full voting rights until 1967.<sup>6</sup> This loss of land, culture and self-determination has had a lasting impact on the well-being of Aboriginal people, producing inter-generational trauma.

***Today, First Nations peoples continue to face institutional discrimination and/or disadvantaged outcomes in education, employment, health, housing, and the criminal justice system. For example, Aboriginal people are, proportionately, the most incarcerated people in the world.<sup>7</sup>***

First Nations peoples actively resist the social, spiritual and economic impact of colonisation and racism, seeking reforms that will empower their people, provide justice and deliver self-determination.

## Incidents

The National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia in 1991 concluded that racist violence and abuse by non-Aboriginal people against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is widespread, and includes physical attacks, intimidation and verbal abuse.<sup>8</sup>

Individuals, organisations and authorities, including police, contribute to this ongoing racism. In the wake of a video showing a police officer throwing an Aboriginal teenager to the ground during an arrest in inner-city Sydney in 2020, Aboriginal community leaders pointed out that this was not an isolated incident:

***'It's more common than you would like to think ... We teach our children how to behave when police are there; don't run, make sure you cooperate. I don't know if people have to do that in most families.'***<sup>9</sup>

One in seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report being sworn at, teased or called names in the previous 12 months.<sup>10</sup> Racial comments and jokes are the most common form of biased treatment. Along with sexuality and gender diverse people, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people experience online hate speech at more than twice the national average.<sup>11</sup>

A survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults across Australia found that 58.5% had experienced at least one type of discrimination or 'everyday racism'.<sup>12</sup> Thirty-one percent of people reported being called names, insulted or yelled at, with 25% stating that police bother

them unfairly. Discrimination was more commonly reported by younger people, females and those living in remote areas.

Localised studies in Victoria found that 97% of Indigenous people had experienced racism in the last 12 months<sup>13</sup> and were four times more likely to experience racism than non-Indigenous people.<sup>14</sup>

First Nations peoples are not only targeted for racist abuse on the streets. They are also subject to mistreatment by the state. In 1987, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody exposed the disastrous impact of high incarceration rates on the lives of Aboriginal people.<sup>15</sup> More than thirty years later, concern about 'a pattern of excessive violence and unnecessary force' by police and corrections staff has not abated.<sup>16</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

**2020**

A large mural of the Aboriginal flag, on a brick wall in a park in Newtown, Sydney, was graffitied with a swastika, in April 2020.<sup>17</sup>

**2018**

A series of racist signs were placed on fences and buildings around an Aboriginal-owned station in Western Australia in June 2018. The signs, which referred to a mining dispute, included threats and the use of the 'N word'.<sup>18</sup>

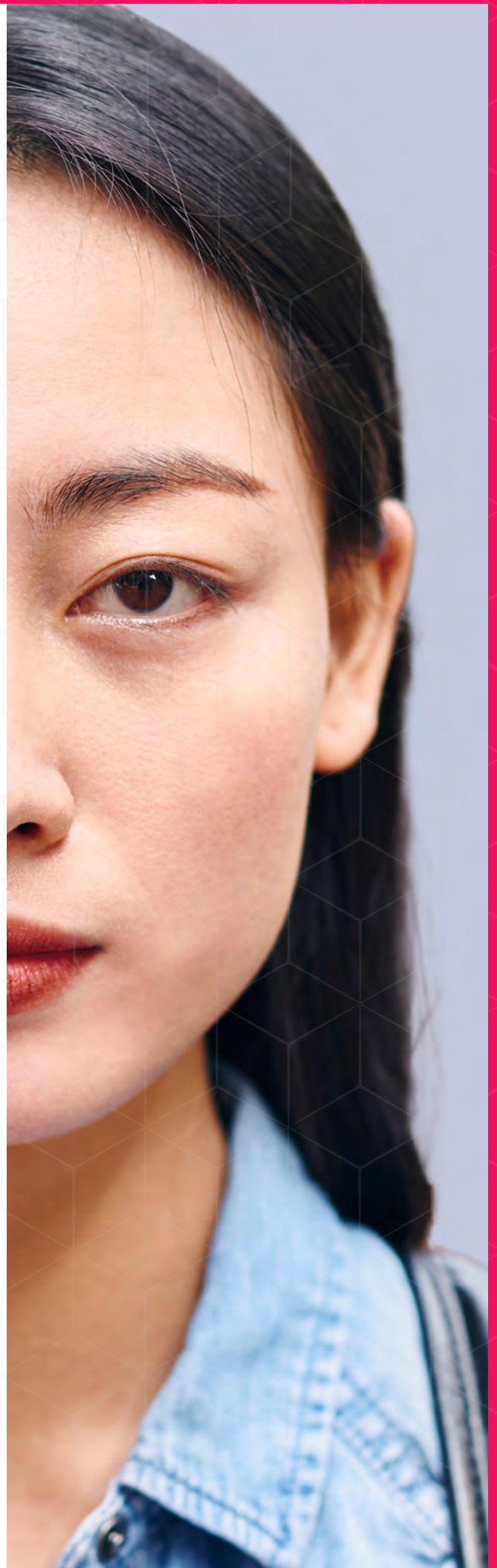
**2013**

Adam Goodes, an Aboriginal football player and Australian of the Year, was called an 'ape' by a person in the audience during a game in May 2013.<sup>19</sup>

# 02

## ASIAN COMMUNITIES

*In this report, we use the term Asian to encompass the many nationalities and ethnicities originating in east Asia (e.g. China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong), southeast Asia (e.g. Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Burma), and south Asia (e.g. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka).*



## Asian Communities Context

Hate crime against members of Asian communities in Australia is caused by racism. However, great cultural diversity between different regions of Asia means that the forms of racism faced by these communities vary significantly. The targets of anti-Asian hate crime in Australia include newly arrived immigrants, third-plus generation Australians, international students from Asian countries, and others of Asian ethnicity.

The 2016 Census recorded that of the Australian population, 5.6% (1.2 million) had Chinese ancestry, and 4.6% had Indian ancestry.<sup>20</sup> Other top Asian countries of origin include the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia. When those working on student and other visas are considered, the number of people of Asian origin in Australia is likely to be much higher than the official data suggests. The Asian Australian Alliance estimates that people of Asian ethnicity comprise 12% of the Australian population.<sup>21</sup>

Chinese people first arrived in Australia in the early 19th century. Many went to the goldfields. People from India initially came to Australia to work as labourers and domestic workers between 1800 and 1860, with many also arriving from 1860-1901 to work as agricultural labourers and in the goldfields.<sup>22</sup> In 1901, the White Australia Policy was enacted specifically to keep out Chinese and other Asian people, but also all non-Europeans. It was in force until the early 1970s. Many Vietnamese Australians first arrived as refugees in the mid-late 1970s.

***Discrimination and hostility towards Asian communities has a long history in Australia. For example, social and other discrimination against Chinese people in the 19th century was widespread.***

There were several anti-Chinese riots on the goldfields, notably the Buckland Valley riot in 1857 and the Lambing Flat riots in 1860-61. More recently, Asian Australians are frequently the scapegoats for insecurity and resentment amongst the non-Asian population about a perceived loss of jobs, educational opportunity or social homogeneity. In her first speech to the federal parliament in 1996, the head of the One Nation Party claimed that Australia was 'in danger of being swamped by Asians'.<sup>23</sup>

The nature and intensity of anti-Asian stereotypes and racism may vary according to the social and political climate at the time. For example, anti-Asian sentiment appears to escalate during periods of high unemployment, volatile immigration debates or negative media campaigns about Asian investment. More recently, it appears that there has been a surge in racism against members of east Asian communities since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

## Incidents

Asian Australians have been identified as one of the primary targets of racist hostility and violence by non-Asian Australians, including verbal abuse, intimidation and physical attacks.<sup>25</sup> A 2005 study found that Vietnamese (and Middle Eastern) migrants reported significantly higher rates of racially motivated assaults and threats compared to the general Australian population and were more likely to fear a racially motivated incident in the future.<sup>26</sup>

Research shows that international students in Australia, particularly from India, have been subject to racially motivated crime and physical violence.<sup>27</sup> This appeared to peak in the cities of Melbourne and Sydney around 2009. More recently, a 2020 survey of Chinese Australians found that 31% had been called offensive names and 18% had been physically threatened or attacked because of their Chinese ethnicity in the last 12 months.<sup>28</sup>

The Asian Australian Alliance produced its first report on anti-Asian racism in 2020.<sup>29</sup> This self-report survey was conducted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is generally acknowledged to have originated in China, resulting in Chinese and other Asian people being blamed for its emergence.

***Between 2 April and 2 June 2020, 377 incidents motivated by racism against persons of Asian ethnicity were recorded. The most common type of incident was a racial slur/ name calling (35%). Almost 60% of incidents involved verbal or physical harassment, particularly spitting. Most incidents occurred on the street or in the supermarket (62%).***

The second Asian Australian Alliance report was released in July 2021.<sup>30</sup> This self-report survey recorded 164 reports for the 13-month period from 3 June 2020 to 28 June 2021.

Australians of Asian origin have also been the targets of extremist groups. For example, the Australian Nationalist Movement (ANM) was responsible for a spate of attacks against six Asian restaurants in Perth in 1988 and 1989. Five restaurants were subject to arson and one was bombed.

Again, in 2004, ANM members firebombed three Chinese restaurants in Perth and targeted Asian-owned shops and synagogues with posters and graffiti of swastikas.<sup>31</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

**2020**

Graffiti of 'COVID-19 CHINA DIE' was painted on the garage door of a family of Chinese ethnicity, in Melbourne in April 2020.<sup>32</sup>

**2020**

An international student from India was allegedly assaulted in Melbourne in September 2020 by a group of young men and women who hurled racist abuse, with one member of the group punching and kicking the student in the head and chest.<sup>33</sup>

**2012**

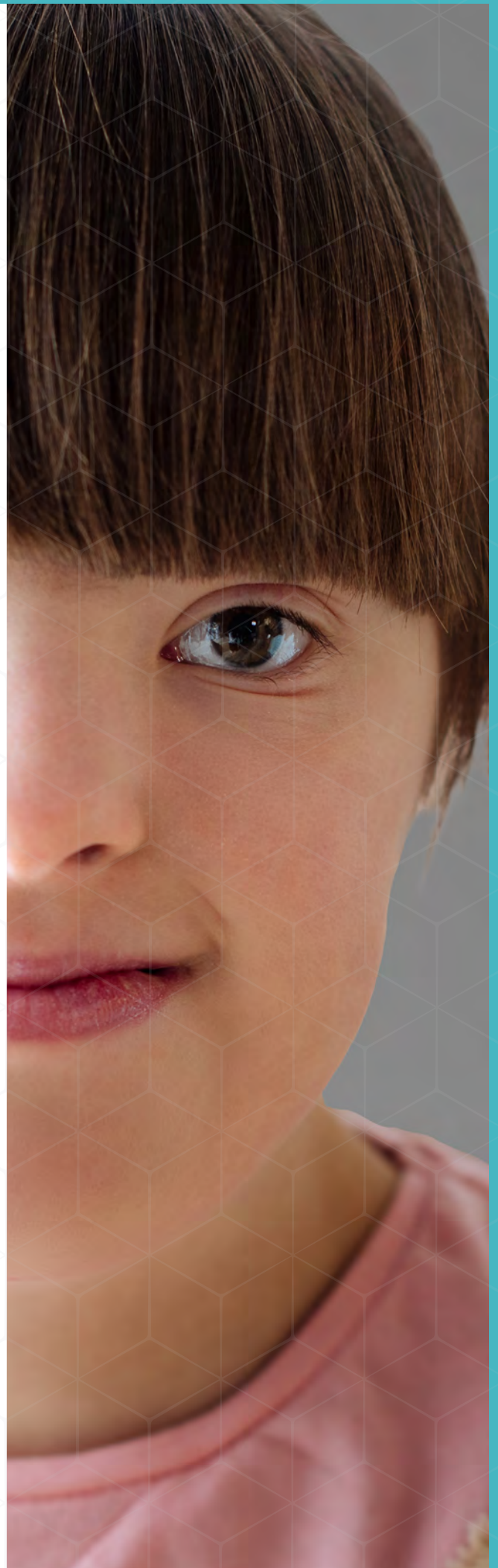
A 23-year-old man was found guilty of the manslaughter of a 67-year-old man in Sydney in February 2012. The offender had racially taunted, chased and assaulted the victim, causing fatal injuries. The sentencing court concluded that the attack was 'motivated by prejudice against people from Japan or perhaps more generally from Asia'.<sup>34</sup>



# 03

## DISABILITY COMMUNITIES

*The term disability is typically used to refer to the wide range of physical and psychological conditions that make it more difficult for people to do certain things. However, disability is not just a medical term. It also has a social meaning. Disability is about an interaction between people with impairments and the institutional and social barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society.<sup>35</sup>*



## Disability Communities Context

Some people are born with some form of disability. Some people acquire a disability later in life, for example, through a health condition, an injury, or as they age.

Members of disability communities may prefer to use different language to describe themselves, such as 'people with disability' or 'disabled people'.

Ableist hate crimes are those where violence or abuse is directed towards an individual based on their actual or perceived disability. It also includes incidents against organisations or people (such as carers) associated with a person with disability. This is one of the most under-researched forms of hate crime.

***Hate crime against disabled people is caused by prejudice – often called ableism – which assumes that living without disability is the normal and most desirable way to live. Disabled people are seen as inferior, disposable and deserving of pity; attitudes of disgust, fear or aversion are common.***

Ableism is also embedded in institutions. For example, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability found that the Australian government had 'deprioritised the vaccination of people in residential disability accommodation'.<sup>36</sup>

In 2018, disabled Australians comprised 17.7% of the population (4.4 million people), with close to 6% reporting a profound or severe disability.<sup>37</sup> The prevalence of disability is similar for men and women but increases with age, for example, 49.6% people aged 65 years and over are disabled.

Historically, people with disability have been marginalised and mistreated by abled people, including governments, families and carers. For example, in 1939, Nazi Germany enacted a program to forcibly euthanise people with intellectual and physical disability. Although the program was abandoned in 1941 due to outrage amongst Germans, thousands of disabled people, including children, were killed.<sup>38</sup> From the early days of the Australian colony, people with mental illness or intellectual disability were described as 'lunatics and idiots',<sup>39</sup> forced into asylums where they endured harsh, degrading and violent conditions. This historical context still shapes the experiences of disabled children, who continue to be excluded from the same educational opportunities as other children.

Although there have been many improvements in public awareness and policy, people with disability continue to have significantly worse life outcomes compared to others (e.g. poorer health and lower levels of education and employment).<sup>40</sup> Disabled people experience ongoing discrimination that denies them full autonomy, dignity and independence.

## Incidents

Disabled people experience violence and abuse at significantly higher rates than abled people.<sup>41</sup> Hate is often expressed as verbal abuse or offensive language but may also involve taunting and teasing or more serious assaults.<sup>42</sup>

This often occurs in public, including schools. As with other forms of hate crime, this abuse is so common that it is often seen as a 'part of daily life'.<sup>43</sup> Disabled women and disabled people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Indigenous communities, and sexuality and gender diverse communities experience layers of violence and are often targeted at higher rates than their abled peers.

In 2018-19, most discrimination or vilification complaints to Victorian and Tasmanian equal opportunity agencies were on the grounds of disability.<sup>44</sup> People with disability also experience financial abuse and exploitation.

***64% of disabled people over the age of 15 years have experienced physical, sexual, and/or, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse and/or stalking. This compares with only 45% of abled people over 15 years.***<sup>45</sup>

Some disabled people are at heightened risk of abuse. For example, disabled women are twice as likely to report an incident of sexual violence over their lifetime than abled women.

People with disability may also be subject to *inaction* from

the very people supposed to support them, including family, friends or support workers. A common practice in disablist violence is to withhold food and to starve disabled people, sometimes to the point of death.<sup>46</sup> This is often called 'neglect' but, in fact, it is a violation of human rights that stems from the biased belief that disabled people do not deserve to be treated with care and respect.

These hate incidents can be more difficult to identify, firstly, because the behaviour is normalised from a young age and, secondly, because it often occurs in private spaces by people known to the victim.<sup>47</sup> As with familial violence towards members of sexuality and gender diverse communities, there is an overlap between disablist violence and domestic violence.

Abuse of disabled people may become intensified during periods of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when abled people become anxious about their own vulnerability – anyone can become disabled – and try to create a sense of security by prioritising their own interests over the rights of people with disability.<sup>48</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

2020

In April 2020, Ann Marie Smith – a 54-year-old woman with cerebral palsy – died from septic shock, multiple organ failure, pressure sores and malnutrition. Although Smith had been receiving at-home ‘care’, it was alleged that she may have spent up to a year confined to a cane chair in her home. Police described the conditions in her home as ‘disgusting and degrading’. In March 2022, the carer of Ann Marie Smith was sentenced to more than six years in prison for her manslaughter.<sup>49</sup>

2020

A 20-year-old man was convicted in September 2020 for stealing cash from another man, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, as he withdrew his disability pension from an ATM in Sydney CBD. Police earlier described the offender along with his alleged companion as ‘low-life grubs’ and ‘cowards’ who saw a vulnerable victim and ‘took the opportunity’.<sup>50</sup>

2020

Willow Dunn, a four-year-old girl with Down Syndrome, died in May 2020. A post-mortem examination concluded she had experienced ‘serious malnourishment’ and other health problems that suggested ‘sustained mistreatment’. Her father and stepmother were charged with her alleged murder in 2020.<sup>51</sup>

04

## JEWISH COMMUNITY

*Jews are a national group, with an origin and continuing presence in the southern Levant region of the Middle East, but many have also lived elsewhere for thousands of years. Judaism refers to the whole culture of the Jewish people.*



## Jewish Community Context

Antisemitism is the term that describes bias or hatred against Jewish people and organisations. It is sometimes assumed that antisemitism is a form of religious bias only, but it is better understood as a form of racism.

Jews and Sikhs are often considered by others to be only a religion, but under Australian law, and the laws of many other countries, they are recognised for human rights purposes as a 'race' because they each have a common ethnic origin and live as both a national-cultural community as well as a faith community.

There are around 120,000 Jews in Australia, making them 0.4% of the Australian population.<sup>52</sup> Jews arrived in Australia as convicts on the First Fleet in 1788. Approximately half of the current Jewish population was born in Australia, and the other half are migrants from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. The Australian Jewish community has the highest proportion of Holocaust survivors outside Israel. This means that for many Australian Jews, antisemitism and genocide touches them personally and profoundly through family members and friends.

***The Jewish people have a long history, over 2000 years, of being vilified and persecuted, on religious, national, racial and ideological grounds. Authorities and mobs have persecuted Jews for over a millennium in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.***

The Nazi regime in Germany (1933-1945) rounded up and murdered 6 million Jews, including 1.5 million Jewish children, in its bid to annihilate the Jewish people.

Australia has had government policies that discriminate against Jews. Most notable were the quotas, kept secret at the time, on the number of Jews immigrating to Australia after WWII. There were also government immigration forms after WWII that explicitly asked the question if one was a Jew, in order to implement the quotas.<sup>53</sup> Despite this, Australia has generally been tolerant and accepting of Jews.

The Jewish community is the only community in Australia whose places of worship, schools, communal organisations and community centres operate, for security reasons, under the protection of high fences, armed guards, metal detectors, CCTV cameras and the like. This necessity is recognised by Australia's law enforcement agencies. It arises from the entrenched and protean nature of antisemitism, resulting in a high incidence of physical attacks against Jews and Jewish communal buildings over the last three decades, and continuing threats.

# Incidents

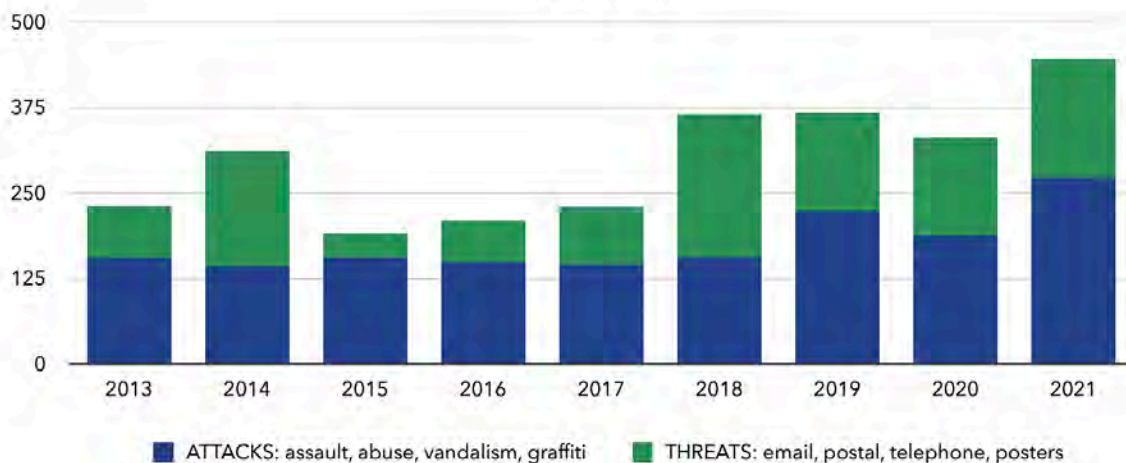
Antisemitic violence was officially noted as early as 1991 in the report of the National Inquiry into Racist Violence, which stated that ‘this year alone’ there had been four arson attacks on Jewish organisations, including three synagogues and a kindergarten.<sup>54</sup>

Since 1990, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry has produced an annual Report on Antisemitism in Australia, which records both antisemitic incidents and antisemitic discourse; it does not include online expressions of anti-Jewish hate in its tally of incidents. The average number of reported antisemitic incidents annually between 2013 and 2021 is 298. In the 2021 Report, there were 447 antisemitic incidents logged.<sup>55</sup> Verbal abuse, harassment and intimidation is usually the category with the largest number of incidents. Surveys of Jews indicate a significant amount of under-reporting in Jewish communities here and overseas.

Many incidents, including abuse, graffiti, and vandalism, occur in and around Jewish community venues, notably synagogues, Jewish schools and other Jewish community institutions, as well as in suburbs where there is a high proportion of Jews residing.

A 2021 survey of Jews in Queensland found that 60% had experienced antisemitism.<sup>57</sup> The most common (50%) forms of antisemitic experience were abuse, harassment, intimidation and bullying.

Anti-Jewish Incidents in Australia  
Attacks and Threats  
2013 - 2021



Source: ECAJ Report on Antisemitism in Australia 2021.<sup>56</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

**2020**

Graffiti of 'Kill the Jews' and 'Kill all Jews' was daubed in several places in Sydney throughout February, August and September 2020.<sup>58</sup>

**2014**

Around 30 Jewish students, aged 5-12 years old, were on a school bus which picked up students from a Jewish school in the eastern suburbs of Sydney in August 2014. They were subjected to physical and verbal threats when the bus was boarded by 5-8 teenagers who yelled antisemitic abuse, including 'all Jews must die', 'kill the Jews', 'Heil Hitler', and 'we're going to slit your throats'.<sup>59</sup>

**2013**

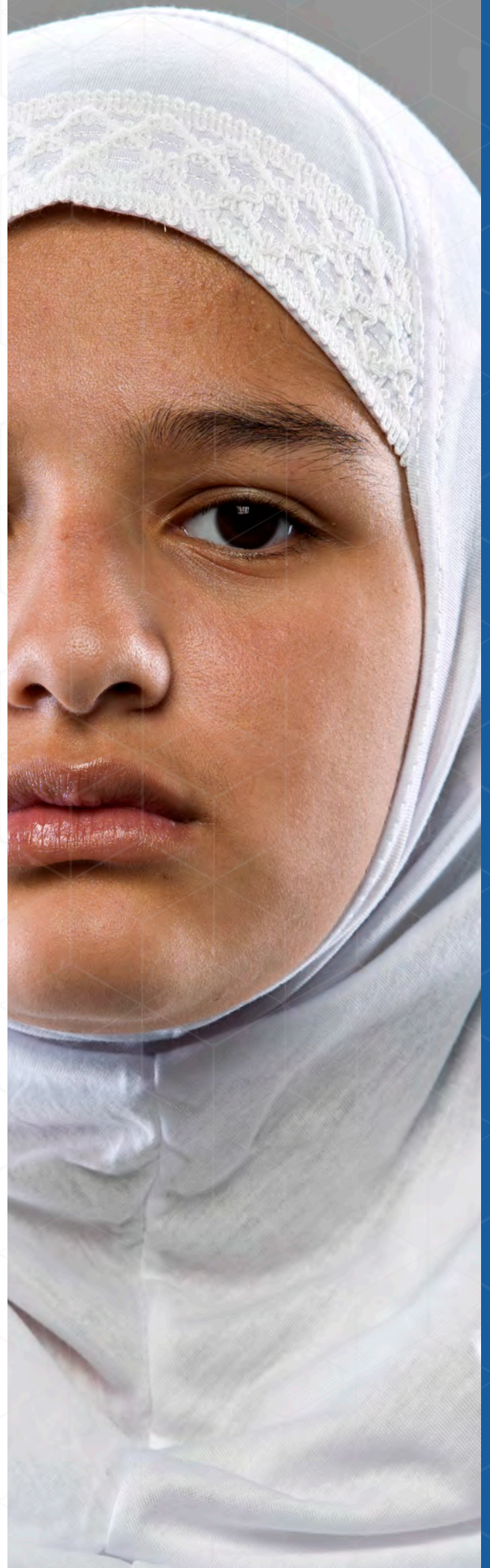
Five members of a Jewish family in Bondi, Sydney, were subject to antisemitic taunts then physically assaulted, by several males, with some of the Jews requiring hospitalisation, in October 2013.<sup>60</sup>



# 05

## MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

*Muslims are people who follow the religion of Islam. Australian Muslims are diverse and come from all over the world, with Pakistan (9.3%), Afghanistan (7.2%), Lebanon (5.8%) and Bangladesh (5.7%) being the most common countries of birth.<sup>61</sup> Over a third (37%) of Muslim Australians were born in Australia.*



## Muslim Communities Context

Bias against the Muslim community is known as Islamophobia, which is also understood to be anti-Muslim racism.<sup>62</sup> Islamophobia is a fear, prejudice or hatred of Muslims and/or Islam. It is driven by ideological, racist and/or religious hostility by non-Muslims against individual Muslims and the symbols of Islam, such as women's head covering (hijab) and mosques.<sup>63</sup>

Muslims first arrived in Australia in the late 1800s to work as camel drivers for the pastoral industry. The first mosque was established around the same time. Substantial migration did not begin until the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>64</sup> Muslims now comprise approximately 2.6% (604,200) of the population. Like some other Australians of migrant communities (e.g. those of Asian or African ethnicities), most Muslims come from countries where they are in the majority.<sup>66</sup>

***While anti-Muslim sentiment was identified by the National Inquiry into Racist Violence in 1991, it began to grow after the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks in the US.***

Since 2001, the conflation of Islam with terrorism has mobilised hostility towards Muslims who are seen by some non-Muslims as a threat to Australian values and security. This is often expressed as a 'go back to where you come from' attitude.

This hostility was on display in a 2005 riot in Cronulla, Sydney, where Muslims and people of Middle Eastern appearance were assaulted by an aggressive mob. The 2020 Scanlon Foundation survey found that the highest rate of negative attitude (37%) was directed toward Muslim Australians, compared to other faith groups.<sup>67</sup>

Islamophobic hate crime is fuelled by online hate and dehumanisation, which may 'embolden' people to target the Muslim community.<sup>68</sup> This is exacerbated by the rhetoric of far-right groups and extremist individuals. For example, the Australian man who murdered 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019 was 'driven by an extreme right-wing Islamophobic ideology'.<sup>69</sup> This atrocity has been deeply distressing and threatening for Muslim Australians.

## Incidents

The Islamophobia Register Australia (IRA) was established in 2014 to record and verify anti-Muslim incidents reported by victims, proxies and witnesses. The IRA has produced 3 reports through Charles Sturt University.<sup>70</sup> The first report covers a 16-month period between 2014-2015, the second report covers 2016 and 2017, and the third report covers 2018 and 2019; published in 2017, 2019 and 2022 respectively.

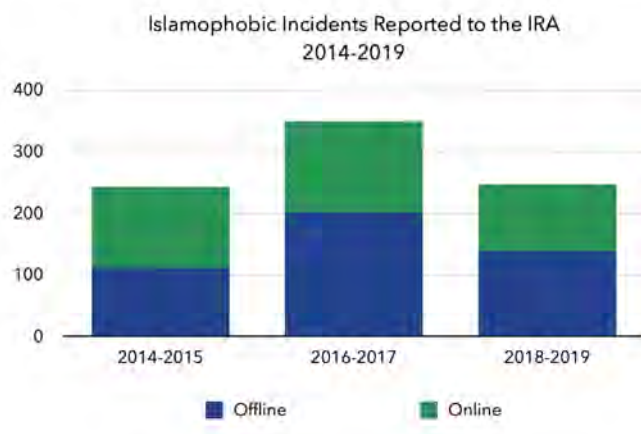
The average number of reported anti-Muslim incidents annually between 2015 and 2019 is 147. In the 2022 report, 247 incidents were recorded during 2018 and 2019, with 109 (44%) of these online.<sup>71</sup> Given that under-reporting is a problem in all communities, the actual number of anti-Muslim incidents is likely to be much higher.

***The IRA reports that Muslim women and girls are the primary targets of Islamophobia, comprising 72% of victims.<sup>72</sup>***

The visibility of Muslim women who wear Islamic clothing, especially a headscarf, intersects with their perceived vulnerability as women to make them key targets of Islamophobic hostility in public places, particularly in culturally diverse neighbourhoods.

Most incidents (67%) of Islamophobia reported to the IRA involved verbal abuse based on the victim's religious appearance and religion. Twenty-five percent of 'offline' incidents (i.e. incidents occurring on the street and the like rather than online) involved physical attacks or vandalism. Severe expressions of hate, such as wanting to harm or kills Muslims, were particularly apparent in online abuse.<sup>73</sup>

Muslim institutions are the targets of Islamophobia as well as individuals. A survey of 75 mosques across Australia found that 58% were targeted between 2014 and 2019.<sup>74</sup> Typical examples of victimisation included arson, physical assault, graffiti, vandalism, verbal abuse, online abuse and hate mail, including death threats. In 2019 alone, 30% of mosques experienced a graffiti attack. The threat of an attack increased in circumstances where the mosque had attracted public attention through media reports (100%) or online opposition to its development (83%).



Source: compiled using data from the Islamophobia in Australia Reports published in 2017, 2019 and 2022.<sup>75</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

2019

Graffiti of 'Remove Kebab' and 'St Tarrant' were daubed on a mosque in Brisbane on 11 September 2019. 'Kebab' is slang for Muslim and 'St Tarrant' refers to Brenton Tarrant who massacred 51 Muslims in Christchurch in March 2019.<sup>76</sup>

2017

A pig's head was left at a Muslim school in Brisbane in July 2017.<sup>77</sup>

2016

A vehicle was firebombed outside a mosque and school in Perth in June 2016. Graffiti of 'Fuck Islam' was painted on the wall.<sup>78</sup>

06

## SEXUALITY AND GENDER DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

*There are many terms that people use to describe their sexual or gender identity, expression and characteristics. These include gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, transgender and non-binary. Some people may identify with more than one of these terms.*



## Sexuality and Gender Diverse Communities Context

In this report, we use the term 'sexuality and gender diverse communities' to encompass these different identities, recognising that each community has its own history and experience of stigmatisation and discrimination. Hate crime against these communities is driven by prejudice that views diverse sexual/gender identities, characteristics or lifestyles as abnormal, inferior or threatening.

There are currently no accurate estimates of the size of sexuality and gender diverse communities. In a recent survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4% of the adult population stated that they think of themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual.<sup>79</sup> However, the population is likely to be much larger as many people may not be willing to 'come out' due to the risk of discrimination. It is not known how many members of these communities choose to keep their sexuality or gender secret to avoid disrespect, ostracism, abuse or violence.

Typically, transgender people have been characterised by the medical profession as having a psychological disorder.<sup>80</sup>

While Australians are now more accepting of the human rights of sexuality and gender diverse people than in the past, discrimination persists. For example, there are still sections of the heterosexual population that think homosexuality is immoral or that gay men and lesbians should not have the same rights as other people, such as the right to marry.

***There is a long history of individual and institutional discrimination and abuse against members of sexuality and gender diverse communities. For example, sex between men was a criminal offence in Australia until the late 20th century, even attracting the death penalty in the 1800s.***

## Incidents

Surveys over many decades have consistently shown that hate crime and hate incidents against sexuality and gender diverse communities in Australia are a significant problem.

A 2020 national survey found that 35% of respondents had experienced verbal abuse (e.g. hateful or obscene phone calls) in the last 12 months due to their sexuality or gender identity.<sup>81</sup>

This was followed by harassment (24%), threats or abuse on email or social media (22%), and threats of physical violence or actual physical violence (15%).

Young people appear to be at higher risk of abuse than older people.<sup>82</sup> However, incidents can occur throughout the lifespan, with close to three quarters of respondents to a 2015 survey stating that they have experienced violence, harassment or bullying at some point during their life because of their 'sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status'.<sup>83</sup> A recent community survey found that 37% of 'LGBTIQA+' Victorians experienced street harassment in the last 12 months. While the survey suggests that this is less than the levels of harassment being reported two decades ago, '1 in 3 LGBTIQA+ Victorians being assaulted or harassed in a public space is clearly still a significant problem.'<sup>84</sup>

***Gay men and transgender women have been subjected to particularly extreme forms of hate crime, including homicide.<sup>85</sup> Victims of gay and transgender hate crime 'often carry enduring physical, mental and emotional trauma as a result of their experiences'.<sup>86</sup>***

The confidence of sexuality and gender diverse communities in the criminal justice system has been undermined by the failure of police to properly investigate hate crimes against these communities in the past.<sup>87</sup>

Concern about being the target of hate may prompt members of sexuality and gender diverse communities to monitor their appearance and behaviour daily. For example, lesbian women may feel they need to 'tone down' their visibility in public space for fear they are vulnerable both as lesbians and as women. Hate crime and hate incidents may spike during social and political debates, such as the 2017 postal survey to gauge support for legalising same-sex marriage in Australia.

Members of sexuality and gender diverse communities are not only vulnerable to abuse by strangers but also by those closest to them. Members of these communities may be more likely than some other targeted groups to be victimised by persons they know, outside of the public eye. For example, one study in Greater Western Sydney, found that 45% of LGBTQ+ people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities reported experiences of family violence because of their sexuality or gender identity.<sup>88</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

2020

A transgender woman was attacked by a group of men in Dee Why, Sydney in March 2020. The group verbally abused the 31-year-old woman before assaulting her and leaving her unconscious.<sup>90</sup>

2018

A same-sex couple in Brisbane had their car tyre punctured and a note left outside their house in April 2018. The note described lesbianism as 'an abhorrent practice' and a 'vile perversion' and ended with 'Get away from the filth!'.<sup>91</sup>

1988

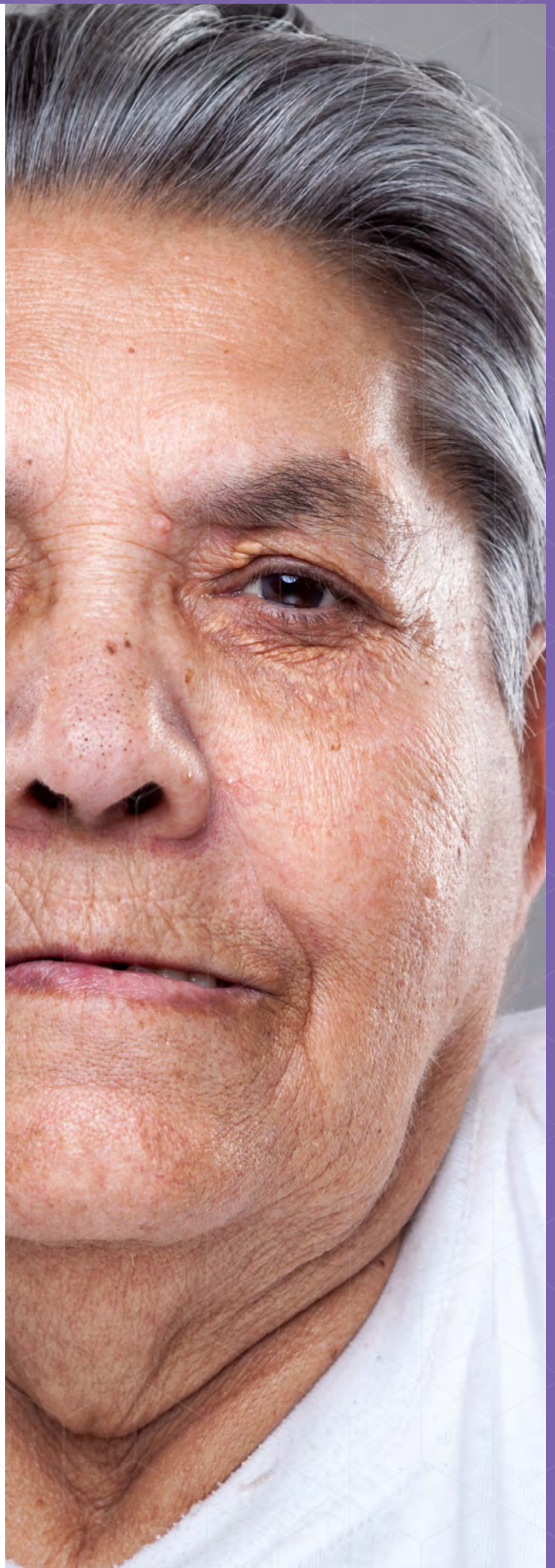
Scott Johnson was a young American gay man studying in Australia. His naked body was found at the base of a cliff in the Sydney suburb of Manly on 10 December 1988. In 2017, nearly 30 years later, a coronial inquest found that he fell from the cliff top 'as a result of actual or threatened violence' from someone who attacked him because 'they perceived him to be homosexual'. In January 2022, a man pleaded guilty to the murder of Scott Johnson. His conviction is being appealed.<sup>92</sup>



# 07

## WOMEN

*Historically, violence against women has not been viewed as hate crime. This is even though Australian women are disproportionately at risk of violence from men, including domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Other countries are increasingly recognising these forms of violence as hate crime. For example, in England and Wales, some police agencies record hate crime that is motivated by hostility based on gender, including harassment and sexual offences.<sup>93</sup>*



## Women Context

The causes of hate crime against women are complex. Historically, women have had much less power and status than men, who controlled key political, economic and social systems. Sexist stereotypes have depicted women as less rational, capable and intelligent than men. This has led to prejudice and discrimination. For example, in Australia, from the beginning of the 1900s, women by law had to give up employment when they got married. This continued for decades. It was only in 1966 that the Commonwealth Public Service abolished this policy.<sup>94</sup> Gender bias has also been embedded in the criminal justice system where, for example, the 'marriage immunity' protected a man from being found guilty of the rape of his wife until the 1980s.<sup>95</sup>

In the past few decades, Australian women have achieved some level of formal equality, yet power imbalances remain today. For example, the 2017 National Community Attitudes toward Violence Against Women survey found 22% of young men believe that men should take control in relationships. Women continue to earn less pay than men<sup>97</sup> and are underrepresented in key leadership roles across all industries in the Australian workforce.<sup>98</sup>

***Women are still exposed to much sexual and domestic violence or harassment.<sup>99</sup> Many people view this violence as driven, in part, by a hatred of women. This is called misogyny. Like racism or homophobia, misogyny involves systematic discrimination or prejudice against a group of people because of who they are, in this case, women.***

***Misogyny is used to justify, excuse and trivialise violence against women and the gendered power imbalances that cause it.***

Women comprise a little over 50% of the Australian population, though this changes dramatically with age - as women tend to outlive men.<sup>100</sup> Some groups of women may be more vulnerable to hate crime than others. Australian women with a disability, for example, are twice as likely to report an incident of sexual violence over their lifetime than women without a disability.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Indigenous women are especially vulnerable to family, domestic and sexual violence, and have much higher rates of hospitalisation from family violence than non-Indigenous women.<sup>102</sup> The criminal justice system continues to struggle to provide effective remedies for the harm of violence against women.<sup>103</sup>

## Incidents

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Australian women are subject to extremely high rates of violence. On average, one woman a week is killed by her intimate partner in Australia.<sup>104</sup>

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- One in six women experience partner violence<sup>105</sup>
- One in two women experience sexual harassment<sup>106</sup>
- 23% of adult women have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime<sup>107</sup>
- 87% of women know the men who have sexually assaulted them<sup>108</sup>
- Most women (70%) are sexually assaulted in a residential place<sup>109</sup>

Women also are subjected to high levels of sexual harassment and abuse from men – both in public and online. For example, a 2017 report found that over 90% of university students who reported experiencing sexual assault at a university residential college were women.<sup>110</sup>

Gendered abuse online, such as ‘revenge porn’, has also increasingly been recognised as a form of hate crime. A recent national survey of people working with victims and perpetrators of technology-facilitated abuse found that the majority of victims were adult women, girls under 18 or non-binary or intersex people.<sup>111</sup>

## Sample of Incidents

2021

A 68-year-old horse breeder from NSW was found guilty of thirteen sexual and indecent assault offences in May 2021. The assaults were committed over a period of years against five young women who worked in a volunteer capacity on his farm.<sup>112</sup>

2020

A Western Australian man was sentenced for threatening his former girlfriend and distributing sexually explicit images of her without consent in August 2020. The photographs had been taken consensually but the man circulated them without permission after their relationship broke down. He also sent dozens of text messages to the woman in which he threatened to release more sexually explicit material.<sup>113</sup>

2012-  
2019

There has been a series of rapes and murders of women in Melbourne over the last decade, including: Aya Maasarwe, a 22-year-old woman who was raped and murdered in January 2019;<sup>114</sup> Eurydice Dixon, a 22-year-old woman who was raped and murdered in June 2018;<sup>115</sup> and Jill Meagher, a 30-year-old woman who was raped and murdered in September 2012.<sup>116</sup>



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# WHEN IS HATE A CRIME?

*Racism*  
*Homophobia*  
*Islamophobia*  
*Antisemitism*  
*Transphobia*  
*Ableism*  
*Sexism*

***Hate is never ok.***

A hate crime is a crime that is motivated by bias or hatred against you because of who you are. This includes your race, religion, ethnic/national origin, sexuality, disability, gender identity, sex, age, HIV/AIDS status, intersex status or because you are homeless.

Hate crime can occur in public or in private, in person or online. Hate crime can be reported. If you or someone you know has been a target of hate, visit [hatecrime.com.au](https://hatecrime.com.au) to find more information about reporting and support.

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