

# Racism – tips for bystanders

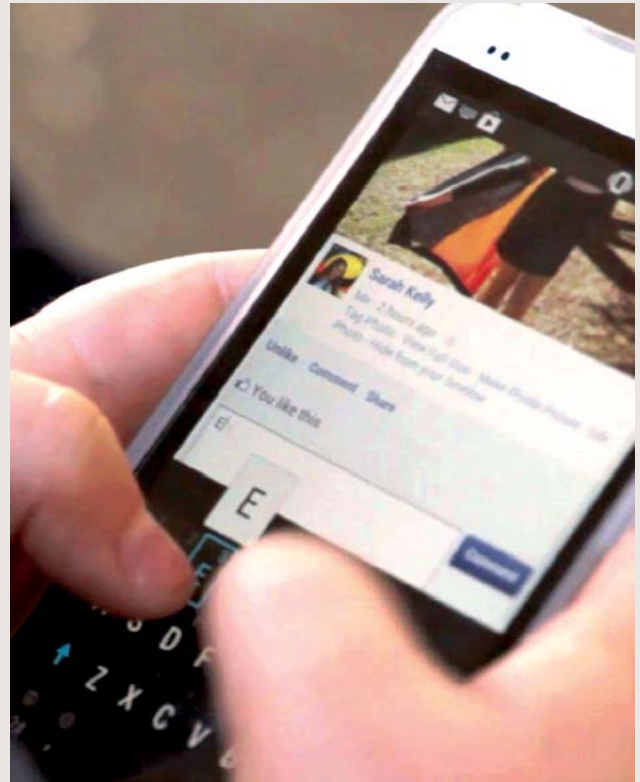
We've all been a bystander at one time or another. You hear or see something racist, feel uncomfortable, want to say or do something but aren't sure what.

Standing up to racism shows the target of the racist behaviour that you don't support it and can be a powerful sign of support. It can also make the perpetrator think twice about what they're saying or doing. But often people don't stand up because they fear becoming the target of abuse themselves.

What you decide to say or do will depend on the situation. You should never put yourself at risk but there are lots of actions you can take that don't involve confrontation. Even a simple gesture can be powerful and shows the person on the receiving end of the behaviour that they're not alone.

## If you see racist behaviour in public, you could ...

**Say something** if it feels safe to do so. It doesn't have to be aggressive, in fact it's often more effective if it's not. It could be as simple as saying "*Why don't you just leave him/her alone?*"



## If it doesn't feel safe to say something, you could ...

**Tell someone** responsible such as the driver if it's happening on a bus or tram or a security guard if it's happening at a club or venue.

Think about how you can **support the target of the abuse** – for example, you could go and sit or stand next to them and check if they're OK.

**Call the police** on 000 if you think that you or somebody else may be in danger.



## If you see racism directed towards a classmate, colleague or team-mate, you could ...

**Suggest they talk to someone.** Most schools, workplaces and sports clubs will have a policy for dealing with bullying and harassment, including racism. You might like to suggest to the person experiencing the racist behaviour that they seek advice from the contact person named in the policy such as the student welfare officer at school, human resources in the workplace or manager or club official in a sports club.

**Say something.** Check out the “Speak UP” handbook at: [www.splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/speak-up-responding-to-everyday-bigotry](http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/speak-up-responding-to-everyday-bigotry) for ideas of things to say to counter prejudice in any situation.

**Let them know they can complain.** The Australian Human Rights Commission can investigate and resolve complaints of race discrimination in areas including employment, education, sport, accommodation and the provision of goods and services. The complaints process is free and confidential. For more information go to: [www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints-information](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints-information)

## If you see racist material online, you could ...

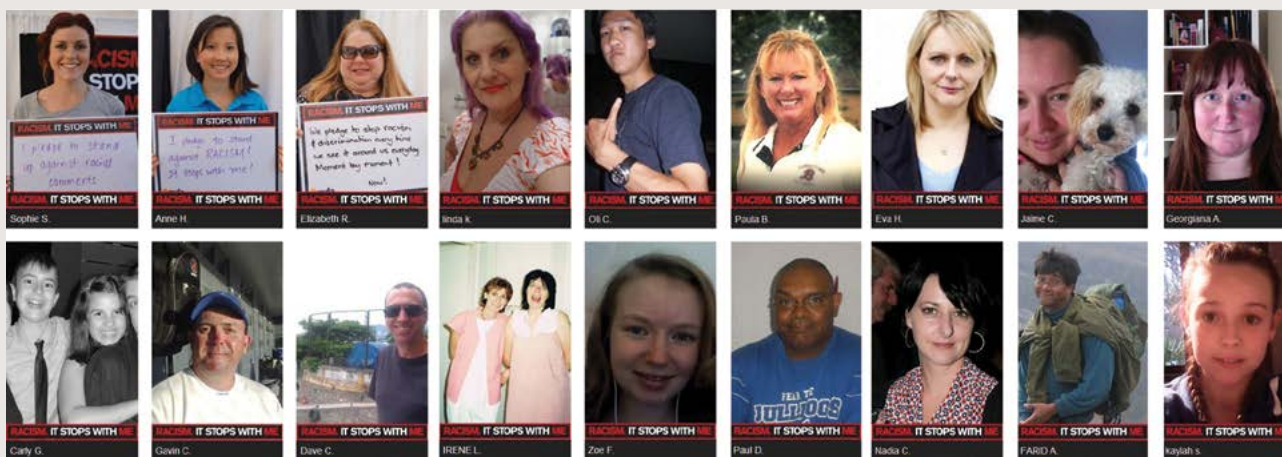
**Report it.** Most social networking sites have policies for dealing with offensive content and enable users to report this material. More information is usually available on these sites under “guidelines”, “standards” or “terms of use”.

**Say something.** Check out [www.antihate.vic.gov.au](http://www.antihate.vic.gov.au) for messages to post in response to “haters” online.



## What else can you do?

**Take a stand against racism** by joining the Racism. It Stops with Me campaign. Upload your photo and share the message with your friends and family at: [itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/it-stops-with-me/individual-supporters](http://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/it-stops-with-me/individual-supporters)



**RACISM.  
IT STOPS  
WITH ME**

RACISM. IT STOPS WITH ME is a campaign which invites all Australians to reflect on what they can do to counter racism, wherever it happens.

For more information go to <http://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au>



**Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission**