

Press Release

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Discrimination on the rise despite good intentions

The release of [The Inclusive Australia Social Inclusion Index](#) marks the fourth time Inclusive Australia and Monash Sustainable Development Institute (MSDI) have measured the country's social inclusion performance.

In the 2018/19 Index, we exposed the extent of prejudice and discrimination that exist in our society. In 2019/20, we see the people who are bearing the brunt of that exclusion and the toll it's taking.

On the positive side, the Index shows:

- Australia's social inclusion score moving up one point to 63 out of 100
- An overall increase in contact with minority groups, particularly with racial minorities, LGBTI people and religious minorities
- A rise in people willing to volunteer with minority groups (one-third of Australians)
- A greater willingness to advocate for social inclusion (three in five Australians are willing to listen to and validate people who claim to be victims of discrimination)
- Growth in the number of 'affected activists' in society (up to 17% from 12%)

On the negative side, we are seeing:

- A sharp increase in discrimination, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (52.1%), religious minorities (39.2%) and LGBTI people (42.6%)
- Lower overall personal wellbeing (6.5 out of 10)
- Intersectional Australians experiencing more discrimination, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability

Our research shows particular hardships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who experience the highest rates of discrimination and intersectional discrimination, and people with disability, whose personal wellbeing is 10 percentage points below the national average.

"What's apparent from this research is the incredible levels of discrimination individuals face on a regular basis in Australia, particularly if they belong to more than one minority group, and it's actually getting worse," Inclusive Australia CEO Andrea Pearman said.

Liam Smith, Director of MSDI's BehaviourWorks Australia, said it's not surprising to see intentions leading behavioural change.

"Attitudes are difficult to change, particularly well ingrained and longstanding attitudes. But what is really clear is the link between contact and reduction in prejudice," he said.

Breaking the cycle of exclusion won't be easy with the research suggesting that systemic and ingrained attitudes are slowing the move forward despite a desire to do so. Adding to this are the heightened tensions and growing inequalities brought on by the Covid pandemic. The 2020/21 Index will be released early next year and explore the impact of the pandemic on our social inclusion score.

- Hear [Hakim and Raji's stories](#) and [Jody's story](#) of discrimination
- Listen to lead researcher [Dr Nick Faulkner](#) explain the findings

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