

Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police  
Graham Ashton  
Victoria Police Centre  
637 Flinders Street  
Docklands, Victoria, 3008

CC: Commander Sue Clifford, Priority Communities Division  
Minister for Police, The Hon Lisa Neville MP

## RE: Equality is Not the Same – The Next Steps

Dear Chief Commissioner Ashton,

The *Equality is Not the Same* action plan is in its final year.

The changes it has introduced have been welcomed by communities across Victoria. New anti-racial profiling policies, training that introduces recruits to the concept of bias and the trials of stop and search receipting have been very important and have put Victoria Police at the forefront of tackling discrimination in Australia. We, the undersigned organisations, agencies and community associations, strongly support the great work of the Priority Communities Division.

However, the cultural change required to see these changes last will take ongoing commitment from Victoria Police at every level of command.

We believe that it is important that new human rights and anti-bias training be provided to all currently serving members, particularly senior constable and sergeant ranks and recommend that the resources be made available to achieve this.

We urge you to roll out the policy of providing a simple receipt to every person stopped by police in Victoria. It will soon become a routine police practice of accountability and respect.

Most importantly, we urge you to implement a comprehensive system of recording simple ethnicity data for all field contacts as indicated in a commitment in the original *Equality is Not the Same* report "*We will revise our field contact data collection, monitoring, analysis and reporting.*" (ENS report page 8).

We note that the ENS report said at page 34: "*We concur that "improving the quality of current data collection processes to monitor field contact activity, in order to identify potential over-representation of specific community groups" (Field Contact Policy review p.69); combined with the review of the policy and improved internal governance, will strengthen community confidence in the process.*"

Despite the ENS's view on the importance of data collection to monitor potential over-representation of communities, this did not occur within last year's receipting trials.

A well-developed LEAP data monitoring system would provide a critical evidence base for all other policy, training and localised interventions to prevent discriminatory policing. The collection and public reporting of data about the (perceived) ethnicity and/or Aboriginality of those stopped helps identify

whether field contacts and traffic stops are impacting racial groups disproportionately. Victoria Police and community agencies can then work out how to reduce this disproportionate police contact. The use of ethnicity data to understand and reduce discrimination is well demonstrated by UK Human Rights and Equality Commission's *Stop and Think Again Report*.<sup>1</sup>

The benefits of the *Equality is Not the Same* action plan are already evident in the growing trust between police and communities. These significant steps toward modern, fair and impartial policing must continue so that Victoria remains a global leader as a cohesive multicultural, multilingual and multi-faith society.

We look forward to hearing how Victoria Police will continue these important initiatives beyond 2016.

Yours sincerely,

*Lyimo Ary*  
Chairperson  
**African Communities Foundation Australia**  
jose@africanfoundation.org.au

*Dr Berhan Mahmoud Ahmed*  
Chairperson  
**African Think Tank**  
b.ahmed@unimelb.edu.au

*Eddie Micallef*  
Chairperson  
**Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria**  
chair@eccv.org.au

*Katie Fraser & Cate Edwards*  
Executive Officer (Acting)  
**Federation of Community Legal Centres**  
executiveofficer@fclc.org.au

*Anthony Kelly*  
Executive Officer  
**Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre**  
ceo@fkclc.org.au

*Kuranda Seyit*  
Secretary  
**Islamic Council of Victoria**  
admin@icv.org.au

*Yadata Saba*  
Chairperson  
**Oromo community Association in Victoria**  
ocaustralia@gmail.com

*Farah Warsame*  
President  
**Somali Community Inc.**  
admin@somalicommunity.org.au

*Deng Duang*  
President  
**South Sudanese-Australia Youth Association in Victoria Inc.**  
wuddeng@gmail.com

*Richard Deng, Kot Manoah*  
**South Sudanese Community Association in Victoria**  
richarddengdit@yahoo.com.au

*Wayne Muir*  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service**  
wmuir@vals.org.au

*Emma King*  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Victorian Council of Social Services**  
emma.king@vcoss.org.au

*Clare Morton*  
Acting Commissioner  
**Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission**  
clare.morton@justice.vic.gov.au

*Ariel Couchman*  
Director  
**Youthlaw**  
ariel@youthlaw.asn.au

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/race-britain/stop-and-think-again>