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RIGHTS IN ACTION

A newsletter for ACT children and young people about their rights and wellbeing



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Did you know...

Canberra is one of Australia's most multicultural cities? One in 4 people were born overseas and there are people from over 200 cultural backgrounds living here.

What's new?

- Enlighten Festival is on until 19 March. There are lots of family friendly things to do and see so check out what is going on to brighten up your Autumn.
- An Adelaide school has introduced a traditional Aboriginal football game called Parndo, originally played by the Kaurna people. Played with a possum skin ball, students are learning how to play the game alongside the cultural significance it has.

March is all about Harmony! In this edition of Rights in ACTION, we are exploring Harmony Day and multiculturalism. We are learning about some of the ways we can celebrate harmony and fight discrimination. I hope you get the chance to celebrate your own culture this month and learn about other cultures in a safe and supportive environment. Together we can help Canberra be truly inclusive for everyone!



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Young Thinker Forum
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WHY DO WE HAVE HARMONY WEEK?

Harmony Week celebrates the cultural diversity of Australia and promotes inclusion. It takes place from Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March. It is all about bringing people together to learn about and respect each other's different backgrounds, increase people's feelings of belonging and stop racism.

During Harmony Week we also mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March.

Diversity means the differences that make us unique, it includes our backgrounds, beliefs and languages.

Inclusion is about making sure all people feel like they belong and our differences are respected and valued.

It is no accident that the two events happen at the same time. Social harmony can not happen when there is still racism, and in the ACT we know from our own research that 83% of children and young people surveyed had witnessed racism and 44% had experienced it themselves.

Celebrating diversity and harmony is important because too many people still experience racism in our local community. Learning about different cultures can help stop racism but it is not the only way!

In 2022, the Children and Young People Commissioner's team asked children and young people in Canberra how to reduce racism in the ACT. There were lots of suggestions for adults and the Government, which we are talking to them about. But there were also some suggestions you can try:



Speak up if you see someone experiencing racism. It helps the person experiencing it to know they have support and others to know that it is not ok.



Don't ignore racist jokes or comments. You can politely point out you think the comment is racist, or ask the person to explain the joke. This is sometimes enough for the person to realise what they said is hurtful.



Learn more about racism through [videos](#), books and [classroom resources](#) for your teachers. Don't expect friends who experience racism to teach you though, as this is not fair on them.



MULTICULTURALISM ACT 2023

On 9 February 2023, the ACT Government passed the *Multiculturalism Act 2023*. Here are a few facts about this new and very important law.

The Act:

An Act is another name for a law that the Government has agreed on ('passed').



- Sets out guidelines for supporting diversity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Guides the ACT Government on how they can deliver policies, programs and services.
- Requires the ACT Government to report on how they are promoting and implementing the Act.

Part of the Act creates a Charter for Multiculturalism. The Charter sets out:



- Clear definitions and values for recognising, celebrating and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the ACT.
- A commitment to actively call out racism and discrimination.
- An acknowledgement that language is important to protect and recognise cultural identity.

DID YOU KNOW...

Dogs wearing a yellow bandana or ribbon need a bit of space? This means you should not go up to it or try to pat it. A yellow ribbon or bandana is a way the dog's owner can let people know their dog is better left alone. This might be because the dog is:

- still being trained
- nervous
- old or grumpy
- unwell or hurt
- learning how to be a pet

Even if a dog isn't wearing yellow, you should always ask owners before you pat a dog as some of them are friendly and some are not!



HELLO!

Hi!

嗨

Hola!

Showing respect for people's differences is about a lot more than learning a few words in a different language. But learning about someone else's language can help them feel that you value their cultural backgrounds. Here are a few ways to say hello in some of the many different languages that are spoken in Canberra.

Namaste
Hindi (from India)

Yuma
Ngunnawal

Selamat Siang
Indonesian

Ni hao
Mandarin (Chinese)

Pagbati
Tagalog (from
the Philippines)

Bonjourno
Italian

Mālō
Samoan

Yassou
Greek

Dobryj den'
ukranian

Ayubūvan
Sinhalese (from Sri
Lanka)

Salaam Alaikum
Arabic

Kia Ora
Maori (from New
Zealand)

Selam
Amharic (from
Ethiopia)



WHAT TO DO IF YOU WITNESS RACISM

When we spoke to children and young people about racism, lots of you told us what you would like other people to do if they see racism happening. Many of you said it helps a lot if people who have witnessed it make it clear that they don't agree because it lets you know you're not alone and means you can address it together.

I feel strong if "I am with other people who are also trying to stand against racism."

Support

"stand up for the person it happened to"

"I'd make an effort to comfort the person, and ask them what they would like to do about it"

"Support the person who has experienced the racism "

Educate

"maybe ask the person who was being racist why they did it"

"Talk to the person"

"Tell the racist person/people that they should stop, and that there being really rude."

Act

"I tell other people about how horrible that person is acting"

"I try to make sure that something gets done about the racist act, or comment."

"Report it"

TREE WEEK

**ARE YOU 5-12 YEARS OLD?
DO YOU LOVE TREES?**

This year for Canberra Tree Week the ACT Government and the Australian National Botanic Garden are hosting an art competition for Canberra kids.

The theme of the competition is 'Trees and Me' so you can show them how you connect with the trees in your backyard, parks and gardens.

Drawings can be in pencil, paint, crayon, mixed media or a digitally created artwork. Entries close on Wednesday 23 March 2023.

[There is more information and an entry form here.](#)

