



THE HON ALAN TUDGE MP
MINISTER FOR POPULATION, CITIES AND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE
ACTING MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, MIGRANT SERVICES AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT

28 April 2020

Standing by our Multicultural Communities

Like all Australians, I have been appalled by recent acts of racism levelled at some in our community, including against Chinese-Australians.

Sadly, we have seen a number of these incidents reported in recent weeks, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. I was shocked to see one of these attacks occur in my own electorate of Aston in Melbourne.

No person, no family, no community should have to put up with this behaviour.

All people in Australia, regardless of their ethnicity or cultural and religious background, have a right to feel safe and respected in our society.

I firstly want to make it clear that the actions of these few cowards do not, in any way, reflect the wider views of Australians.

We are the most successful multicultural society in the world. Almost half our population was either born overseas or has at least one parent born overseas. Cultural and religious diversity is part of our everyday experience.

Australians are proud to welcome people from all backgrounds and we give everyone a fair go, regardless of where they are from.

The despicable actions of a few should never be allowed to overshadow this fundamental truth.

Let me also be clear that this Government has no tolerance for discrimination of any kind. We will not stand for violence, threats or intimidation against anyone, regardless of their background.

Violence and assault is violence and assault. These are criminal offences and there are federal and state laws in place with significant penalties, including fines and jail time.

I hope the cowards involved in all these incidents are brought to justice.

There is no need to stay silent. If you are the victim of this behaviour, report it. If you witness this kind of behaviour, call it out and support the victim.

And if you are one of the cowardly perpetrators involved, the message is simple: Stop it. One positive has been the willingness of those targeted to stand up and call out this behaviour. I thank and commend all those who have been brave enough to speak out.

It has also been heartening to see the universal condemnation of these incidents. Australia's multicultural communities have been critical in preventing the spread of coronavirus, by adhering to social restrictions and making significant changes to their lives, to save the lives and livelihoods of others.

I would also like to thank the many multicultural community organisations that have rallied together to help those who are isolated or who are vulnerable. Many great organisations have been preparing and delivering meals, providing support and checking in on the elderly.

It is these actions that will help get through this crisis stronger and more united than ever.

The Australian Government will continue to focus on keeping our communities safe and enhancing the well-being of all Australians. We will continue to work with Australia's multicultural communities to ensure all Australians are secure, and recognising the significant contribution migrants have made to our nation.

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you are in an emergency or at risk of immediate danger call: 000

If you have experienced racial discrimination, you can make a complaint through the Australian Human Rights Commission: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint>

Lifeline (crisis support and suicide prevention): 13 11 14

Beyond Blue (mental wellbeing support service): 1800 512 348

Media Contact:

Minister Tudge: Steve Kidner 0466 385 097