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## Contact Information

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## New research findings: barriers to reporting hate crimes in Australia

Only 38% of victims of hateful incidents will make a formal report to relevant agencies, a new study finds.

Launched today, the report *Barriers to Reporting Hate Crime and Hate Incidents in Victoria* by Dr Matteo Vergani (Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies, Deakin University), and Dr Carolina Navarro (Deakin University) the study shines a light on the issue of the under-reporting of hate incidents and hate crime and the reasons why people don't make reports to agencies or service providers.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increase in hate and division occurring both on and offline, this study provides valuable information for Victorian law enforcement, government, human rights and community services to better support victims of hate incidents and hate crime and helps to address the root causes of division.

'By improving reporting mechanisms and communication with the community about what and how to report these incidents will lead to better understanding the rates of hate incidents and hate crime. This in turn will help all of us - government, law enforcement, human rights agencies and community services - to better support those that experience a hateful incident as well as help us find solutions to hate and division in our community' Dr Vergani said.

The study highlights that while people are aware that they should report hate crime, when victimised, there are a number of barriers that prevent them from doing so.

'Different communities experience barriers in different ways, because of the unique nature of their histories, vulnerabilities, and forms of hate crime victimisation. For example, a primary barrier to reporting, especially among African and Aboriginal communities, is the perception that law enforcement agencies demonstrate discriminatory behaviour towards racial minorities' Dr Vergani said.





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The study finds a large disconnect between available hate incident and crime reporting avenues and current reporting levels and a lack of classification of the different types of barriers to reporting. In response, the authors developed a reporting barriers typology divided into internal and external barriers which can help law enforcement, human rights and community agencies improve and connect current reporting avenues and services.

'We defined internal barriers as the normalisation of hate, shame, self-deprecation and a lack of knowledge of what a hate crime is, and how to report it. And, external barriers including fear of retaliation, of getting in trouble, of not being treated fairly by police, and other technological and language barriers to reporting' Dr Vergani said.

Other key findings include that 92% of survey participants would report a physical assault to the police, but when asked about their real experiences of victimisation, only 5 out of 13 participants reported being the victim of a prejudice motivated violent physical attack to police. Additionally, only 1 in 5 participants would report being the victim of a prejudice motivated sexual assault.

The study, part of a larger research project - [Tackling Hate](#), used mixed-methods to identify the internal and external barriers to reporting hate crimes and incidents in Victoria.

Dr Matteo Vergani recently hosted a CRIS webinar - [Data matters! Why we need a national system for recording hate crimes in Australia](#) with Senator the Hon Kristina Keneally, Mr Luke Cornelius APM and Race Commissioner Mr Chin Tan.

