



PACIFIC ISLANDS COUNCIL QLD INC

Serious vilification and hate crimes

Submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Queensland Parliament

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Pacific Islands Council of Queensland Inc (PICQ) represents the voice and views of Pacific Islands nations' organisations in Queensland. As a voice, PICQ is aware of its communities' members from various cultures and religious experiences and supports victims of vilification and hate crimes. Since its formation in 2008, PICQ (formerly known as Pacific Islands Reference Group at the time) has experienced racial and religious vilification of community members and as an organisation. PICQ has also seen the progression of Queensland's Multicultural Act and applauds the Queensland Government for this review. It is our view, that this review is the right step forward in making Queensland a cohesive state where all peoples of all races, religions etc live in harmony.

The experiences of our communities' members have been numerous with very few cases reported to QPS. When asked why members have not reported, our communities' members have said that they were fearful of being victimised by employers and losing their jobs; some members informed PICQ that they thought QPS would not follow through with their police report; some said it was a waste of time telling anyone in authority (especially QPS) which in some has built a resentment towards authorities. The following examples is a snapshot of experiences by our communities:

1. For adults, experiences of race vilification have been around the racially insinuating language used at work places to describe or make reference to someone of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
2. PICQ supports Pacific Island workers in the Seasonal Workers Program (SWP) and Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) who have reported being referred to in workplaces in racially derogatory ways.



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3. A member of the community in regional Queensland was charged more in city rates because she was a migrant even though she was and is an Australian citizen. This rate payer was paying more than those beside and around her.
4. Minors: High school students from Pacific Islands backgrounds most likely get pulled by security or QPS if the student or students are with their Caucasian friends from mainstream cultures. Also, most PI children will take the racially derogatory slurs and not report it to parents or teachers or other adults. An example, my son who attended an all boys private school was singled out a number of times by QPS officers when he was with his school friends and he happened to be the only coloured boy in the group. That experience created resentment towards police in him. It has taken some positive parental counselling in our part as parents to make our son change his views.
5. PICQ has experienced online racial vilification in our social media in 2018. We had to block people from our page and continue to carry out regular surveillance online to remove racial vilifying comments.

PICQ supports the move to strengthen the criminal laws about vilification and hate crimes which needs to include online vilification and hate crimes. Online Vilification and Hate Crimes are probably easier to police as there is traceable electronic footprints of perpetrators. It is important that this legislation includes online platforms so as to prevent the possible manifestation of crimes in the physical sense. In PICQ's experience, we were able to block those online racist trolls as soon as we noticed the comments on our social media. There are CALD individuals that face online bullying and vilification and these legislations need to be able to help individuals in those situations. In addition, education on how one deals with online bullying, vilification and hate crimes is necessary.

PICQ believes that in strengthen these laws and giving the budgetary allocations to the authorities to enforce these laws will strengthen the Queensland legislative processes.

In addition to the strengthening of the vilification and hate crime laws, it is also important that the continuous education of all communities around these laws, what the laws mean and how these laws are applied, a task that needs to occur simultaneously. Queensland population is a multicultural one which needs all communities (including mainstream and not just the CALD communities) working together to make life in Queensland a safe and harmonious one.