



Whose Responsibility?

Community anti-racism strategies
after September 11, 2001

Tanja Dreher



Centre for Social
Justice and Inclusion

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?
COMMUNITY ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIES
AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muslim, Arab and Sikh communities in New South Wales have experienced an increase in racism, discrimination and harassment since September 11, 2001. UTS Shopfront Monograph No. 2, *'Targeted'*, documented racially motivated incidents producing a climate of fear and insecurity which continues to impact on experiences of citizenship and belonging among the communities targeted. While much research analyses the 'problem' of racism, this report highlights the responses developed by targeted communities, often in partnership with government. *Whose Responsibility?* identifies ways to develop better community and government strategies to address increased tensions in community relations, drawing on the lessons learned in the community sector in recent years. The research is based on interviews with key policymakers in state government, and extensive community consultations and interviews with Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities.

The key findings on community anti-racism strategies in NSW after September 11, 2001 are:

- **Targeted communities reaching out**
Community response projects are heavily reliant on volunteers from Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities and on overstretched community organisations. Response strategies are dependent on the knowledge, skills and generosity of the very communities experiencing racism. Anti-racism work detracts from core community development work, yet many individuals and organisations continue to reach out to develop better community relations.
- **Need for long term planning and crisis support structures**
Community workers are tired of lurching from crisis to crisis and want support and funding to develop long-term proactive strategies.
- **More and better partnerships**
Existing partnerships enable a timely and effective response to crises in community relations. Government / community partnerships are seen as central to anti-racism work, but the terms of the relationships need to be rethought.
- **Community capacity building**
Skills development, knowledge transfer and employment assistance are vital to develop sustainable community relations work.
- **Need for recognition and support for community work**
Community organisations require greater support and encouragement as they make a significant contribution to community relations in NSW and rely heavily on volunteer contributions.
- **Media reporting and political leadership**
Mainstream media reporting and public statements by senior figures in government can undermine community relations work. There is a widespread perception that media reporting is one of the most important factors in community relations, and also one of the most difficult issues to address.

- **A limited agenda**

The majority of community anti-racism strategies have adopted an agenda of dialogue and understanding. Interfaith dialogue has emerged as the most common response strategy. These strategies tend to focus on individual prejudices rather than wider issues of power and privilege.

- **Taking responsibility**

While communities experiencing racism are at the forefront of anti-racism work, there is a need for many more institutions, organisations and individuals beyond the Muslim, Arab and Sikh communities in NSW to take responsibility for responding to racism.

RACISM, RESPONSES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Whose Responsibility? documents and analyses the many ways in which communities experiencing racism after September 11, 2001 have responded to prejudice, harassment and discrimination. As contemporary research is developing more complex understandings of racism and community relations, there is a need to develop innovative and sophisticated responses to moments of crisis. Where much existing research documents the extent of racism and its impacts, there is comparatively little research which explores the possibilities and the limitations of anti-racism work in Australia. This research asks: what responses have been developed by communities targeted after September 11, 2001, and what can be learned from those responses? The discussion focuses on projects and strategies developed by people working with Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities in New South Wales to respond to the impacts of racism and widespread fear documented in previous research. The report maps the field and identifies common challenges with the aim of contributing to wider processes of innovation in anti-racism work.

The research aimed to: identify the strategies deployed by racialised communities to respond to a climate of increased racism; to identify successful responses; and to analyse the challenges for community anti-racism work. By documenting practices of speaking up, reaching out and facing up to pervasive fear, the research highlights the agency of targeted communities. Far from being passive 'victims' of racism, Muslim, Arab and Sikh Australians are in fact at the forefront of contemporary community relations and anti-racism work in NSW. This activity highlights one impact of the climate of fear after September 11, 2001: there has been an increased interest in interfaith dialogue and in anti-racism work, which has created both the desire and the need for people working with communities experiencing racism to develop response strategies.

At a time when Muslim Australians in particular are regularly called upon to 'speak up' and to 'integrate', this report finds that communities experiencing racism are contributing considerable amounts of expertise, knowledge and volunteer time to the vital task of building better community relations. While the community response strategies analysed here have had valuable outcomes, the research also identifies wider questions of responsibility and commitment. Responses to racism have been developed in a context in which the persistence of racism in Australia is consistently denied, and there has been a retreat from the language and policy of anti-racism. This has been most evident in the shifting priorities of the federal Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' 'Living in Harmony' program (Ho and Dreher 2006), which funded many of the projects discussed here. Much community anti-racism work after September 11, 2001 has emphasised dialogue, understanding and interaction, which are central to the 'harmony' agenda. Dialogue can produce important outcomes, but it also emphasises individual attitudes and responsibilities. The wider challenge of addressing difficult social and political issues remains a responsibility for the Australian community as a whole, rather than those communities that are targeted by racism.

Muslim, Arab and Sikh communities targeted after September 11, 2001

Whose Responsibility? is a companion to the UTS Shopfront Monograph 'Targeted', which documented experiences of racism in NSW after September 11, 2001 (Dreher 2006). 'Targeted' analysed the data collected by a telephone Hotline established by the Community Relations Commission For a multicultural New South Wales (CRC) within hours of the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. The data included several hundred reports of violence, harassment,

prejudice and discrimination targeting Muslim and Arab Australians, and impacting on communities mistakenly identified as Arab and/or Muslim, such as Australian Sikhs. The upsurge in public expressions of racism and prejudice at that time created a pervasive and ongoing climate of fear in which the targeted communities continue to feel insecure, unwelcome and under siege. This Monograph builds on the snapshot of experiences of racism presented in *'Targeted'* by examining response strategies developed by targeted communities.

The data collected by the CRC Hotline confirmed research conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) and others. In national consultations with Arab and Muslim Australians, *Isma*, HREOC (2004) found that the majority of Australian Muslims consulted had experienced escalating prejudice because of their race or religion as a result of the events in New York and the Bali bombings in 2002. The *Isma* report also found evidence of increased reporting to community organisations of discrimination, vilification and prejudice, as well as under-reporting to authorities such as police and HREOC itself.

In an important intervention, Greg Noble (2005) has analysed the reporting of social incivility to highlight the prevalence of mundane and even routine forms of harassment directed towards Muslim and Arab Australians after September 11, 2001. These banal and everyday racisms include 'rude or insulting everyday behaviours – name-calling, jokes in bad taste, bad manners, provocative and offensive gestures, a sense of social distance or unfriendliness, an excessive focus on someone's ethnicity' which are rarely reported. Yet Arab and Muslim Australians increasingly feel uncomfortable in their everyday worlds as a result of these harassments. While comments, gestures and looks may seem relatively inoffensive, they are in fact experienced as deeply hurtful particularly where there is a lack of response or care.

The racism experienced by Arab and Muslim Australians after September 11, 2001 has been categorised as 'cultural racism' or 'new racism' (ADB 2003), terms used to emphasise the ways in which concepts of culture and ethnicity have largely replaced race in the many ways in which human beings are marginalised, demeaned, threatened, excluded and dehumanised on the basis of devaluing their group identity. After September 11, 2001 there has also been an increased focus on religion, and Islam in particular, as opposed to classic or biological racism that emphasises physical traits. The new racism focuses on beliefs and values and assumes an incompatibility of cultures. It is highly visible in public debates in arguments such as the 'clash of civilisations' thesis, in which targeted cultures and communities are 'othered' and demonised as inherently backward, uncivilized and threatening (Poynting et al 2004) .

Impacts on targeted communities

The existing research clearly indicates that the increased experiences of racism and prejudice against Muslim and Arab Australians after September 11, 2001 produced a climate of intense fear and insecurity among the targeted communities. The HREOC report (2004:4) found that 'the biggest impacts are a substantial increase in fear, a growing sense of alienation from the wider community and an increasing distrust of authority'. Consultations consistently reveal reports of individuals and families afraid to leave their homes, afraid to dress as they choose, fearful of neighbours or colleagues and scared of further violence or abuse (Poynting 2002, Poynting and Noble 2004).

The experience of living in fear serves to rob people subjected to racism of a feeling of being 'at home' (Noble 2005) and diminishes the exercise of citizenship and possibilities for participation in social and political life (Poynting and Noble 2004, Dunn 2003, Humphrey 2003).

After September 11, 2001 and during international crises and heightened conflict in the 'war on terror', Arab and Muslim communities in Australia have felt themselves to be 'under siege' and 'living in fear'. Pervasive fear limits the use of public space and personal safety as members of targeted communities may be afraid to leave the house, afraid to go to school, to visit the beach or to travel on the train. Many activities that most Australians simply take for granted become threatening for those who are assumed to belong to Muslim and Arab communities, including groups mistakenly identified as Muslims, such as Australian Sikhs. As racism targets groups rather than individuals, fear spreads among the communities singled out – fear that it could happen to other members of the community, fear that it could happen to other communities.

Harassment leads to feelings of frustration, alienation and a loss of confidence among targeted communities, coupled with a loss of trust in authority. Community consultations have identified a high level of concern at the absence of consistent legal protection from religious vilification and discrimination across the country, particularly among Muslim Australians (HREOC 2004). The perceived inadequacy of complaints procedures and the indifference of authorities have led to a reluctance to complain and chronic under-reporting of racially-motivated incidents (Poynting and Noble 2004).

Widespread fear and insecurity has important implications for a sense of national belonging and citizenship, as targeted communities are made to feel alien, unwelcome, unwanted, uncomfortable and excluded. Pervasive racism and discrimination can lead to a reluctance or inability to fully participate in public, social, political and economic life so that those impacted are unable to fully exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Dunn 2003, Poynting and Noble 2004). Impacts on targeted communities thus have important consequences for community relations more generally. The costs of mental and physical health concerns, despair, anger and frustration are high and contribute to a loss of productive diversity and decreasing participation and business. The most comprehensive national consultations on eliminating prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians found that 'in the current environment of fear and suspicion fostered by terrorism and the 'war on terror', our multicultural values of social equity and respect for diversity are at risk of diminishing' (HREOC 2004 :iv). The lack of trust, security and safety experienced by Arab and Muslim Australians after September 11, 2001 undermines democratic values such as the equality of rights and belonging to Australia.

It is also important to note research commissioned by the Special Broadcasting Service which reveals that most Australians are in fact 'living diversity' — most Australians value Australian multiculturalism and experience relatively unproblematic everyday interactions across cultural differences (Ang et al 2006). Alongside the racism and prejudice against Arab and Muslim Australians after September 11, 2001 are the lived experiences of 'everyday multiculturalism' in which colleagues, neighbours, friends and family of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds meet and mingle. When combined, the recent research paints a complex picture of racism and cultural diversity in Australia, indicating both the prevalence and persistence of racism in Australia, and the reality of widespread cultural mixing and stable community relations.

Researching community anti-racism work

The term 'community' is used with considerable reservations, as 'communities' are never natural or stable, and any attempt to mobilise definitions of 'community' necessarily entails processes of exclusion and homogenisation. Nevertheless, the term community is useful in the context of this research to the extent that it refers to a field of organisation and activity at some remove from state and commercial institutions. More importantly, the racism and prejudice targeting Arab and Muslim Australians after September 11, 2001 frames and treats the vast diversity of Muslim and Arab identities as largely undifferentiated communities. It is this dynamic that is highlighted by the use of terms such as 'racialised communities' and 'communities experiencing racism' in this report. The activities analysed here as community response strategies are shaped by the processes of racialisation which produce particular 'communities' as threatening, fearful or unwelcome.

The focus on community anti-racism strategies arises from UTS Shopfront's commitment to community-engaged research. When the Shopfront was contracted to analyse the data collected by the CRC Hotline, the researchers involved argued to extend the brief beyond the important task of documenting experiences of racism, to the equally vital task of both documenting and analysing the ways in which communities experiencing racism were responding. The aim was to produce findings that record this under-recognised area of community work and to offer some reflections on the successes and the limitations of that work. The purpose of documenting this largely neglected field of activity is to share examples and experiences from those projects which the organisers themselves have judged as (relatively) successful. In addition, this report aims to contribute an analysis which draws in a highly selective way on wider academic debates on racism and anti-racism. The research itself has identified a lack of time and intellectual resources for reflection as a crucial challenge for community anti-racism work, and *Whose Responsibility?* is intended to provide suggestions and provoke deliberations as to how best to develop effective and innovative anti-racism work. The reflections do not critique specific projects, but rather highlight wider trends and the political, social and policy context in which particular projects are developed. While such a small scale research cannot possibly address the many complex academic debates around anti-racism in any depth, the report does point to a number of key concepts and arguments which seem particularly productive in light of the successes and the limitations of community anti-racism work after September 11, 2001.

During 2004 UTS Shopfront conducted more than 20 interviews and consultations with a range of people involved in organising community response projects among Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities, including youth workers, community representatives, volunteers with community organisations, community cultural development workers and community workers. Representatives of key NSW state government departments involved in government / community partnerships with Muslim and Arab communities were also interviewed. Interviewees involved in community anti-racism projects and programs were identified through peak community organisations and an audit of response strategies published as part of the Isma project. The interviews contributed to both the 'Targeted' report on experiences of racism in NSW after September 11, 2001, and this Monograph on community anti-racism strategies. A list of interviews and consultations is included at the end of this report. The research also draws on ongoing informal consultations undertaken at UTS Shopfront

through its reference groups, a regular program of community-initiated projects and capacity building workshops. The data collection included an element of action research, as UTS Shopfront collaborated with several community organisations in the development of media and cross-cultural education strategies in particular (see case studies 2 and 3).

Data collection focused on Muslim, Arab and Sikh communities as these groups had been identified as experiencing intense racism and fear during and after the latter half of 2001. Most of the consultations took place in Sydney, with some conducted in the Illawarra area. Projects in other parts of NSW were documented through the collection of online and hard copy promotional materials and reports. The concentration on NSW is significant, as Sydney is home to the largest Arab Australian and Muslim Australian populations in Australia as well as Australia's largest mosque, at Lakemba. Furthermore, these communities were under considerable scrutiny and experienced an intensification of racism *before* the events of September 11, 2001 impacted on Arab and Muslim communities around the globe. In Sydney, news reports in August 2001 of a series of vicious group sexual assaults perpetrated by Lebanese-Australian young men led to an intense moral panic around Islam and Arab Australians which dominated media and public debate for several weeks and continues to influence everyday experiences of racism (ADB 2003, Dreher 2003, Poynting et al 2004). Arab and Muslim communities in Sydney have had little choice but to develop response strategies, and there is much to be learned from their experiences.

The research is presented in three chapters. The first chapter outlines the four most prevalent response strategies identified through community consultations; interfaith; cross-cultural education; media and community cultural development. The report draws on quotes from recorded interviews and highlights common observations and arguments shared by the diverse range of participants in community consultations. Each of the four strategies is illustrated by a brief case study of a project which exemplifies the key features of that strategy. The analysis seeks to identify successes and places particular emphasis on the dilemmas, challenges and limits revealed by the experience of community anti-racism work after September 11, 2001. There is relatively little existing research on community anti-racism strategies in Australia, and the analysis draws on the research and reflections developed by those engaged with anti-racism and community relations work.

The second chapter discusses organising principles and challenges underlying all of the community anti-racism strategies. Government interviews and community workers agreed on the importance of partnerships, community capacity building and sustainability principles for the development of effective anti-racism and community relations programs. Under-funding and the difficulties of evaluation are significant practical challenges identified across the consultations. Chapter three synthesises the key findings and most important lessons learned through the analysis of community anti-racism work. The conclusion sketches the wider implications for ongoing community relations, highlighting the importance of issues of representation for anti-racism work, and the need for greater responsibility for community relations work beyond communities experiencing racism.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE STRATEGIES

Organisations and individuals working with Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities impacted by the events of September 11, 2001 have developed a range of strategies to respond to the climate of racist incidents and increased fear. Many people felt the need to develop strategies due to the perceived inadequacies of government responses. The following analysis focuses on key strategies adopted in many response activities rather than on individual projects.

Given the widespread impacts of September 11, 2001 documented in the *'Targeted'* report, community representatives felt that different response strategies were needed in a range of areas:

In 2001 different community organisations came together for an Arabic Community Forum to develop long term strategies. It was decided to focus on four key areas: education, media representation, networking and legal.

This report analyses the four most common response strategies described in community consultations: media interventions; community cultural development; interfaith; and cross-cultural education. Individual projects typically adopt a combination of these strategies, such as a video production project for young people which incorporated elements of community cultural development, skills development and capacity building, all facilitated within the framework of a wider partnership strategy.

While community projects responded to increased racism in the community after September 11, 2001, many interviewees felt that 'these issues are not new to the community' and community organisations are constantly involved in building better relationships between communities. In times of heightened tensions such as the aftermath to September 11, 2001 community workers are confronted with the difficulties of balancing ongoing community work with responding to crisis:

We can't prioritise, it becomes very difficult. In crisis mode it is just reactionary work, there is no time to plan.

In our interviews people involved in community response projects expressed a strong desire for proactive projects and long term strategies. Initiating and sustaining community projects in an atmosphere of increased tension requires community organisations to form stronger relationships, both with other community organisations and with government.

Response Strategy 1: Interfaith

Interfaith aims to break down barriers or stereotypes and to promote interaction and dialogue between people of different faiths. The most common activities have been public access to places of worship (eg Mosque Open Days), events such as interfaith dinners or forums, and projects which promote ongoing processes of personal interaction.

Since September 11, 2001 there has been a marked increase in interfaith activities across NSW and Australia as an increased interest in Islam coupled with public misconceptions about the religion created the need to promote better understanding between religions:

The one good thing that has come out of September 11 is the heightened interest in Islam.

Interfaith has been very productive because people are for the very first time engaging in a way that they haven't engaged and seeing the common ground that they have with other faiths.

Indeed, interfaith dialogue may be the most common community response strategy, attracting considerable funding from anti-racism and community relations programs such as the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' 'Living in Harmony' initiative. The proportion of 'Living in Harmony' grants awarded to religious organisations or for religious projects has more than doubled in the last six years (Ho 2006). A major national survey of religion and cultural diversity in Australia also found that constructive engagement increased after September 11, 2001, arguing: 'now that religion is at world centre stage, the interfaith challenge has become a necessity' (Cahill and Leahy 2004: 10). The events of September 11, 2001 and the ongoing 'war on terror' have taken place at a time when Australia is 'becoming both more secular and more multifaith', with religions other than Christianity rapidly gaining in numbers, and the population of Australian Muslims increasing by 40% between the 1996 and 2001 census (ibid:9).

In community consultations interfaith activities were viewed as important to counter negative images of Muslims and Islam in the media:

The wrong image is out there. People have the wrong image. Since September 11 and the Iraq war Muslims are always on the news ... this stirs emotions both positive and negative. People react to those emotions. We try to address emotions.

Islam is a misunderstood religion - one of the most misunderstood. There is a big interest to know and understand Islam - What is Islam really? They hear one thing in the media and want to know what Islam is.

Public access and personal interaction

Interfaith projects involved promoting public access to places of religious worship, including Mosque tours and Open Days:

At the 2003 Open Day in August over 1000 people came through, there were tours every five to ten minutes with the influx - it was a huge increase on the year before.

Other interfaith projects focused on ongoing personal interaction between members of different religious communities. A project which involved Muslims and Christians taking part in monthly dialogues in each others homes was praised as a 'great project' because participants 'get to know Muslims and Christians rather than just Islam and Christianity'. The fact that it was 'a 6 month project, not a one off talk' was seen as part of its success because it 'allowed us to build relations and become friends'.

Case Study 1: Encounters

The *Encounters* project was originally based on the interaction of six groups consisting each of four Muslims and four Christian youth who met each other once a month in their homes. They would talk about topics that affected them all but from different religious perspectives. This led to fruitful discussions that were not concerned with finding an outcome to such differences but rather aimed at providing an avenue of inter-religious and cultural interaction.

Encounters is a program of Affinity Intercultural Foundation, a non-profit organisation established specifically to deal with interfaith and intercultural relations. It was formed in early 2001 by predominantly second generation Muslims living in Sydney. Affinity's three main areas of focus are building relationships with segments of society, interfaith dialogue and academic projects with universities.

The impetus behind the formation of such an organisation was to foster an understanding and genuine respect among people of different faiths, beliefs and cultural backgrounds. The mission statement of Affinity sums up the rationale for projects such as *Encounters*:

We at Affinity Intercultural Foundation believe that the *human touch* makes all the difference. When people know and try to understand each other in the *other's frame of reference*, a natural affinity emerges between them. *It is this affinity that shatters stereotypes, false assumptions and negative perceptions. It all starts with the individual and through building synergy influence masses.*

Encounters has developed into an ongoing program, the Home Encounters Network, which brings together school students of different faiths in classroom interactions as well as home based visits. The program seeks to 'focus interfaith on a local postcode level and neighbourly interactions, not only to share and learn about each other's commonalities but also to celebrate our differences, at a postcode level'. Participants emphasise the importance of building friendships, saying 'I took part in this program to make new friends. I secured a good number of good friendships. I want to continue making new friends'.

In addition to the *Encounters* program, Affinity regularly organises conferences, dinners including awards ceremonies and women's events, cultural tours of religious sites, and publications such as '101 Questions You Asked About Islam' (Ozalp 2004).

Interfaith was welcomed by interviewees as a response which facilitated public support from the broader community for communities under attack and saw religious leadership from a range of denominations taking a public stand against racism. Although one interviewee commented that the move to interfaith took too long to happen, most interviewees were positive:

[Through interfaith] there are strong commitments and joint approaches being developed which has taken people out of their isolated communities because now they see that the church has, for example a responsibility to speak out and to advocate for others.

Limitations and challenges

The majority of interviewees believed that interfaith had been extremely successful in promoting better understanding between different religions. Interfaith advocates argue that dialogue between religious communities is central to the construction of social harmony and to multiculturalism, as interfaith activities contribute to creating social capital, positive communication, ethics and values (Cahill and Leahy 2004:9-10). However, some interviewees expressed concern that interfaith programs may be 'preaching to the converted' and fail to adequately address prejudice:

Senior Sikhs have participated in local Interfaith events. But the people who come to those events are not those who need to know. It can be an academic exercise. It does not address understanding among those who do discriminate. We are continuing to participate. We have invited Scout groups, schools and universities to visit our Centre and learn about us.

The sudden popularity of interfaith dialogue has also been described as a 'desecularisation' of multiculturalism and anti-racism work in Australia, as cross-cultural education and anti-racism work is increasingly conducted through a framework of religious identity (Ho 2006). Interfaith activities exclude people who do not identify with a faith, and most interfaith activities after September 11, 2001 have focused on the Abrahamic faiths – Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The emphasis on common ground and achieving harmony can also mean that contentious histories and contemporary conflicts are not discussed. In this research, interfaith workers said they avoided political issues:

We don't get into political things, we wouldn't talk about the Israel-Palestine situation but have to address issues such as terrorism, suicide bombing and Jihad because a handful of people give the wrong information. And because the media reporting is out there people think that's what Islam is.

Strategies of interfaith dialogue must therefore wrestle with the tensions between avoiding difficult issues and addressing the events and beliefs which motivate participants. Furthermore, Ho (2006) argues that the causes of conflicts which feed prejudice against Muslims are secular and political rather than religious, and dialogue around theology and religious traditions cannot address these underlying structural causes.

Beyond the difficulties of moving beyond networks of committed organisations and individuals, advocates of interfaith have identified a number of barriers to interfaith cooperation among faith

communities, including 'religious superiority, exclusivist theologies of other world religions and unwillingness to participate in inter-faith initiatives' (Cahill, Bouma, Dellai and Leahy 2004 : 118). In the most comprehensive research on religion and cultural diversity in Australia, Cahill et al also found that 'anti-cohesion attitudes seemed more entrenched in Sydney than elsewhere' (ibid : 94). These authors identified four current challenges for all religious traditions over and above the central challenge of 'dealing with cultural pluralism and religious fundamentalism', arguing that all faith communities must develop an ecological consciousness; commit to gender equality; focus on the spiritual and mystical; and promote social justice (ibid : 127).

Cahill et al note a number of limitations to contemporary interfaith work, including the reliance on volunteers and the inadequacy of high level interactions which do not 'trickle down' beyond the meeting of religious leaders (2004 : 90-91). Overall the research suggests a need to develop interfaith strategies which can address political issues as well as past and current conflicts, and activities which maximise participation and interaction beyond community leaders and public events. Cahill et al advocate the development of a 'new religious cosmopolitanism' to address the interfaith challenge, arguing that 'each religious group should develop and fully disclose its theology of world religions, enunciating in a public statement their relationships with and beliefs about other world faiths' (2004 : 118).

Response Strategy 2: Cross cultural education and cultural awareness training

Strategies for cross-cultural education or cultural awareness training have similar aims to interfaith dialogue – to develop understanding of diverse cultures, raise awareness of issues of racism and discrimination, and to address and counter stereotypes. Unlike interfaith dialogue, most of the education and training delivered by people working with targeted communities took place in institutional contexts such as workplaces and schools, or targeted service providers and policymakers. In this context, some facilitators aim to develop cultural competence, encouraging participants to be self-reflective and to examine the assumptions and knowledge base that they bring to their work.

The most common activities for cross-cultural education were the production of information pamphlets or booklets and the delivery of cross-cultural awareness workshops:

We developed a brochure: 'The Sikhs – an Introduction'. Around 10 000 copies of the brochure have been distributed across wider Australian communities. The brochure provides a brief overview of Sikh beliefs and practices and the significance of the hair and turban etc.

Arab and Muslim community organisations reported an enormous demand for cross-cultural education and cultural awareness training from government agencies, service providers and interested individuals after September 11, 2001:

There was a huge increased demand for seminars. We've had 90 calls in a day wanting to join seminars.

Interviewees said that staff in government departments require more cultural awareness training. A young woman told of her experience with the NSW Police Service:

The policeman I was working with had never met a Muslim woman ... I constantly had to explain things. He was really genuine, I was happy to explain but at the same time it made me realise how many people in NSW government departments are in those senior positions that know nothing and really could contribute to policies and change things.

Teacher training was also seen as inadequate:

Education is a key area and religious studies teachers need more training, some say they are only one page ahead of the students.

Peak community organisations are regularly approached by government departments, non-government agencies and businesses to provide facilitators and trainers for cultural awareness training and cross-cultural education aimed at staff, students and service providers. A typical workshop on 'Demystifying Arab culture' might include sessions on the Australian Arab community, the Australian Arabic Muslim community, refugee issues, the Sudanese Australian community, the Mandaean Australian community and youth issues. Sessions are usually facilitated by speakers from ethnic and religious community organisations, or community workers from Migrant Resource Centres and similar organisations.

One community worker estimated that she had conducted hundreds of cultural awareness seminars in the last three years, focusing on understanding Islam and issues facing Muslim women in Australia. The most successful workshops included forum theatre and role play.

Case Study 2: Cultural Awareness Workshops

Nada Roude has delivered a cross cultural religious awareness-training package of seminars for various government departments and agencies, service providers and the general community. Developed with the United Muslim Women Association, UTS Shopfront and Bankstown Council, these specially designed six training sessions gave government professionals a better understanding and knowledge of working with Muslim communities.

Each seminar was designed to equip participants with practical knowledge of the Muslim way of life. The course was delivered through a series of short thematic interactive dialogue and discussion sessions. An information booklet was provided to help untangle myths and dispel the many stereotypes which exist about Islam, and to educate these professionals about the diversity of the Muslim community.

The aim behind these seminars was to educate the various professionals within the government departments in their dealings with the Muslim community. The most innovative and perhaps the most successful aspect of the seminars was

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the use of forum theatre, in which facilitators act out scenarios in response to directions from training participants. Interactive theatre was used to workshop contemporary issues such as the public debate over Muslim women's use of a public swimming pool, enabling participants to explore the issue from a range of perspectives:

That whole engagement made people sit and watch and opened up new perspectives on how they could perhaps deal with it. That engagement was critical and helped cement a whole range of issues in their head about how do we approach difference? How do we deal with responding to community needs? What are networks? What is religiously acceptable?

A number of community groups organised meetings, workshops and forums with media representatives in particular. Interviewees felt that community organisations were best qualified to provide cross cultural education to government and other agencies. Representatives of the Sikh community said that smaller communities such as the Sikhs should be represented in cultural awareness training. A Sikh community organisation has lobbied for information to be included in the NSW School Curriculum, such as the fact that Sikhs fought at Gallipoli.

Interviewees suggested that products of community cultural development projects such as books and films can be used for cross cultural awareness through distribution to schools and to government agencies such as police. Facilitators also felt that cultural awareness seminars provided the opportunity for the Muslim community to engage with government departments and opened up possibilities to develop future projects. Interviewees argued that there is a need for greater governmental participation in promoting cross-cultural education as a core anti-racism practice in order to develop more equitable and culturally aware modes of designing programmes and policies that affect marginalised communities.

Limitations and challenges

This section lists the most salient issues identified in the research:

- **Innovation**
Both informal consultations and published research consistently find a desire for 'education' to address racism and prejudice (eg HREOC 2004) and it would be rare indeed to find an argument that there is no place for education strategies in anti-racism and community relations work. Despite this understandable desire, there are very few fora in which to discuss and evaluate different models and possibilities, or to develop innovative approaches. While there is an extensive literature and ongoing debates within education research (see Bonnett 2000 and Dei 1996 for overviews), people working with targeted communities responding to crises have relatively little opportunity to engage with these debates in their own cross-cultural education and cultural awareness work.

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- **Essentialising**
In fields such as health and education, models of cultural competence and cross-cultural education have increasingly been critiqued. A common criticism is that cultural awareness training and cross-cultural education often rely on essentialising representations of cultures and communities, focused on tradition and markers of difference. Such understandings obscure the diversity of communities, the complex and shifting nature of cultures and the possibilities and everyday experiences of cultural interactions and mixing. Instead, targeted cultures and communities are discussed as problems to be managed.
 - **Structure and power**
Cultural competence encourages self-reflexivity, but has been criticised for focusing on interpersonal or crosscultural communication rather than on power differentials. Writing on diversity and health, Culley (1996) argues that cultural competence is based on the assumption that professional's cultural insensitivity can be addressed through education rather than by political processes or institutional change. Recent literature suggests that education needs to focus on systemic biases and inequalities at least as much as on individual prejudices.
 - **Whiteness**
Some of the most innovative and challenging suggestions for anti-racist education come from researchers drawing on critical race and whiteness studies – and addressing both multicultural and Indigenous contexts. Many argue that the most important task of crosscultural understanding is in fact to understand 'one's own culture, society and history, and their political relation to those of others' (Jones 1999:314). This means that, rather than only learning about 'other' cultures understood as different and problematic, education must provide 'space for students to explore their own cultural 'attributes' of class or gender or ethnicity or sexuality etc' (Durie and Taylor 1998). For Nicoll (2005), the challenge of education is to understand one's location and implication in networks of power and privilege. Alison Jones (1999) reminds us that this requires of dominant groups 'ears that hear', and these 'ears' should be developed in educational practices that do not necessarily require the presence of the 'other'. These arguments suggest innovative possibilities for community anti-racism education, focusing not so much on 'understanding' the cultures or 'problems' of targeted communities, but rather examining the uneven distribution of privilege and responsibility.

Response Strategy 3: Media interventions

A number of interviewees said that a vital component of community capacity building was improving media skills within the community. Recent research on racism in Australia has also recommended that communities subjected to racism in the media should be supported with training for media spokespeople and in developing more productive relationships with professional journalists (HREOC 2004, ADB 2003, Dunn and Mahtani 2003). Research into religious diversity and interfaith also found significant concerns about the negative impacts of media reporting, and recommended education

for university journalism students (Cahill et al 2004: 126). Given the prevalence of complaints about media representations recorded by the CRC Hotline (Dreher 2006), it is hardly surprising that community consultations underscored the need to respond to racism in the media:

Following the negative coverage in the media post September 11 (and even earlier following the gang rapes) we discovered the community's ability to respond adequately, promptly and in a timely fashion to attacks on the community was [low]. The task was extremely difficult. Not only did the community not have effective access to those mediums in order to respond to the issues that were raised, but it also didn't have the skills or networks to do that effectively.

The majority of participants in the community consultations saw responding to media coverage as an ongoing challenge:

We are constantly responding to the media. We have made a deliberate decision not to respond to certain things. We don't want to feed the frenzy but at the same time we do want to balance media stereotypes. We have spent days [doing nothing] but responding to the media.

A youth worker expressed frustration that communities lacked a diversity of spokespeople:

A small minority always speak on the behalf of the majority of the community. The media always use the same spokespeople and people like me get kicked to the curb.

Community media interventions have been defined as those projects and practices which explicitly aim to intervene in or change the ways in which communities that are experiencing racism are represented in the mainstream media (Dreher 2003). Media intervention strategies range from media complaints to training for spokespeople, media forums and campaigns, to 'strategic withdrawal' and working outside the conventions of mainstream media representation.

Media training which taught community members to 'speak back' to the media and provided strategies to use the media to project positive images of community groups was seen as a valuable aspect of community capacity building:

The only way you are going to give people opportunities to speak and respond is first you instil in them the relevant skills and you give them the opportunities to have interviews on radio or in newspapers and learn how to use the system to respond if they see an article that's inappropriate.

Empowering community members to actively engage with the media generally had a twin focus of firstly, responding to negative media and, secondly, generating positive coverage:

[It is important to] show a different face of Muslim women. Show the community that we are just like anyone else, we are interested in the same things. Get the media involved – media came to the blood donations yesterday. We approach the media. The CRC is very supportive – Muslims have been targeted [and we] want to get the media involved to promote positive images.

Case Study 3: Media Advocacy Network

In November 2001 journalism educators at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) facilitated a day long workshop on media skills for 20 members of the United Muslim Women Association (UMWA) in Sydney. UMWA organisers had approached UTS as they felt that young Muslim women lacked the skills and confidence to adequately respond to intense media scrutiny. The workshop included sessions on writing for the print media, responding to newspaper reporting, developing media management skills, a tour of community radio station 2SER FM and participating in mock interviews, practising techniques for adversarial interviews. The outcomes of this and a follow up media skills workshop were seen as empowering for participants, and an organiser reported that 'young Muslim women are taking a more active role in responding and speaking out [to the media]'.

Several participants in the 2001 workshops maintained an ongoing interest in media responses and media production leading to the development of a quarterly magazine, *Reflections*, to break down misconceptions about Muslim women:

We want to tell people who we are, what we believe in. We don't want any more this whole representation of us; we don't want people to have an image of us that's false ... we don't want to be the victim anymore.

Reflections is available online and in hard copy, and regularly publishes both contributions which respond to mainstream media agendas or widespread stereotypes of Muslim women, and those which emerge from the concerns and priorities of young Muslim women themselves.

The *Reflections* production team and other UMWA members have also participated in training in investigative journalism, and organised public forums intended to intervene in prevailing news agendas. In the wake of the 2005 London bombings the UMWA organised a conference provocatively named 'Jihad: Terrorism or a Muslim's Highest Aspiration?'. Journalists were invited in the hope that they would ask organisers about this title, giving the UMWA an opportunity to challenge the media's use of the word 'jihad' and to put forward alternative definitions.

Developing media skills in the community typically involved partnerships or dialogue with universities and media professionals. Peak Muslim women's organisations have worked in partnership with university journalism educators to develop a Media Guide (IWWCV 2005) and a program of training materials and seminars for university journalism students. Media strategy was also integral to

partnership projects and Government partners in community response projects were eager to obtain positive media coverage:

A central aim of the partnership is to promote positive images of young people. This is done in indirect ways; there are limitations due to being within government. The success of the projects is the best positive image. Young people in all the programs are encouraged to be very active at University or wherever; they are high achievers. [The program] has been the biggest success so far for promoting positive images.

While community organisations and individuals were also keen to obtain positive media coverage and to allow participants in projects the opportunity to tell their own stories, there was concern that focusing on obtaining positive images meant more difficult community projects were not attempted.

Limitations and challenges

While there has been little research into community media interventions, these activities are distinct from those of community media and alternative media and demand greater attention in both policy and research. The existing research into community media interventions in Sydney's racialised communities (Dreher 2003) has identified a number of dilemmas echoed in the consultations for this research. While people involved in community media intervention activities have found it relatively straightforward to learn basic media skills, producing longer term change and influencing news agendas has proved far more difficult. Media advocacy work has led to a greater diversity of spokespeople from Arab and Muslim communities being used as sources in mainstream media in Australia, and some spokespeople have established highly productive professional relationships with interested journalists.

Interviewees, however, remained frustrated at their relative lack of success in promoting 'positive stories' and in finding an outlet for alternative stories about Muslim and Arab Australians beyond the narrow news agenda of crime, threat and terrorism. A key stumbling block has been journalism's central professional value of editorial independence. While the news media has increasingly made space for a wider diversity of sources and stories concerning targeted communities, journalists and journalism institutions have been less willing to negotiate with those communities or to take on board alternative news agendas. Community spokespeople are routinely asked to respond to journalistic scrutiny rather than to determine the agenda for reporting on issues affecting their communities (ADB 2003). While Muslim and Arab Australians are increasingly visible in the mainstream media, journalism conventions and the presumed interests of the 'mainstream' audience continue to mark the limits of how and when targeted communities can speak.

Government interviewees and community representatives felt that mainstream media and public statements by senior figures in government could undermine community relations work. Community interviewees explained that 'responsible leadership is particularly important in a crisis time' and funding should be made available to community groups that are affected by racialised reporting:

More work needs to be done with the media. The government can do more and assist here.

Wider government responses were seen with scepticism when they were contradicted by government's media responses to community tensions:

Government rhetoric often inflamed tensions.

They've helped, but they haven't built the community to respond to discrimination. The responses haven't addressed the real issue. What's that saying? The same people pissing on your knee are throwing you a towel to wipe it off.

The successes and limitations of community media intervention strategies after September 11, 2001 suggest that producing change in the news media is neither easier nor simpler than working for change in other institutional contexts. Indeed, this research and the evaluation of the CRC's Community Harmony Reference Group both found that community and government representatives involved in responding to racism after September 11, 2001 felt news media to be the most difficult institutions to influence (CHRG 2003). However, the news media may appear to be a more accessible and important target of intervention precisely because of the ubiquitous, mundane and highly visible nature of mainstream journalism.

Response Strategy 4: Community cultural development

Community Cultural Development (CCD) processes work across a wide range of art forms in what is intended to be a collaborative and empowering creative process. CCD projects developed with targeted communities after September 11, 2001 involved story-telling through a variety of different mediums, including books, magazines, films, theatre and hip-hop. The process is underpinned by a commitment to community capacity building and aims to 'forge and develop spaces for self expression, self definition, and to argue for self determination' (Abood 2006:26). A highly experienced Community Cultural Development practitioner, Paula Abood, has defined CCD as:

...a set of principles and practices that give communities the opportunity to develop and express their own cultures. CCD is mostly understood as a process involving the participation of communities, artists and arts workers or CCD workers to develop and produce a work of art (2006:25).

CCD workers interviewed for this research stressed that the outcomes of CCD projects are secondary to the process of CCD. Those processes have ambitious aims, including: 'empowerment through participation, self determination through resourcing leadership, engendering confidence through self-expression, [and] effecting change from within through creative engagement' (ibid:48-49). CCD was generally seen as an effective community response strategy although all the practitioners interviewed stressed that CCD is only effective if the community members involved in the project have creative control over the project.

In this way Community Cultural Development addresses one of the central difficulties identified in community media intervention strategies. Rather than responding to the demands of mainstream media or issues raised in public debate, CCD aims to produce 'a place to speak without having to respond to outside demands' (Nahlous 2006:12). Facilitators of CCD projects praised CCD because it

provided marginalised community groups with the space to tell their stories. A community worker involved with a CCD project commented:

The project is really important because it's a story telling project: it centres their narrative and voices. It brings them together to produce a book which is counter to the stereotypes and normalised narratives of someone from an NESB.

CCD was a popular response strategy for projects that involved young people because, as one community worker observed, it involved 'young people speaking for themselves'. CCD projects often incorporated media strategies designed to obtain positive press coverage of the project. Community workers often saw improving the public image of a particular place or group of people as an integral part of community cultural development.

Case Study 4: Trouble Comes to Me

Trouble Comes to Me is a short film by a group of Arabic speaking youth that detailed their experiences of everyday racism and overpolicing. The action revolves around four young Arab Australian men driving in their local neighbourhood as they are pulled over by the police. The film depicts the interactions from the point of view of the young men, who feel targeted, humiliated and frustrated in their dealings with police. As the title suggests, these young men feel that they don't have to go looking for trouble, rather conflict comes to them.

It's basically about the conflict between the Arab community and the police and how they see each other and the different ways of basically stereotyping. How different Arabs act. It doesn't mean everybody acts the same. We just made this movie just to show how it is.

The film was part of an initiative of the Premier's Department's Youth Partnership with Arabic Speaking Communities in partnership with community sponsor Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE). As part of the Youth Partnership, ICE organised a camp, 'Shifa-Agents of Change', exploring complex issues of cultural identity for young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The camp gathered young people between the ages of 15-19, mostly Arabic speaking, from Western Sydney in an attempt to provide leadership training and to engage them in cultural work with their communities. The title, 'agents of change' reflects a deliberate decision by ICE to define leadership in terms of working for social change rather than as individual success.

A group of young men involved in the camp took part in ongoing workshops with CCD facilitators. A writer facilitated the development of participants' stories into a script, while film and sound artists provided training and direction for the film

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production. The film has subsequently been shown in film festivals and at public forums both around Australia and internationally. The film has also been used in training for police officers in New South Wales on how to deal with culturally and linguistically diverse youth and communities as well as being screened for mainstream media workers. Participants in the filmmaking process have gone on to produce a follow on film and have sought funding to produce a feature length movie.

Several interviewees said that the products of CCD work can become valuable resources for wider education strategies. In addition to the use of *Trouble Comes to Me* in police training, Afghan women's dobaiti poetry produced through a CCD project has been read by university literature students as part of University of New South Wales syllabus (Vieceli 2006: 17).

Common to all CCD practitioners interviewed was an emphasis on the affective outcomes for participants, including improving confidence and self-esteem, producing a sense of empowerment. Participants in the Afghan women's dobaiti poetry project reported 'joy at being a part of a creative process, [...the process] helped in dealing with pain, sorrow and loss' and, for one participant, a public performance of the poetry was 'the first time she felt at home' in Australia (ibid: 18). CCD can thus provide 'a vibrant cultural life for those for whom it remains out of reach' (ibid).

Community workers said that improving the self-esteem of young people was a crucial part of CCD. A typical comment was that participants in CCD became 'more confident'. A youth worker said:

There is a lack of high quality resources for young people of particular backgrounds. Many people are feeling depressed and justifiably paranoid about the way that they are being treated and this was a good mechanism to make the community feel better.

For the young people involved in CCD projects, cultural production was an opportunity to reject negative media images:

In community cultural development I think a successful outcome is producing something that community and participants can be proud of and speaks their voice in a way that isn't mediated by outside influences but influenced by community concerns and action.

A community worker on a school based CCD project said that the project 'broke down some of the barriers between students from different backgrounds'. CCD was also seen by some interviewees as an important way of skilling participants for jobs in the arts and entertainments industries, although other interviewees stressed that employment outcomes were not the focus of the CCD projects:

We work with communities through the artists and if that stuff is great then that's great but to put that expectation on people is pretty crazy – that we're going to working with you for the next few months because we want you to become a professional music artist. And how realistic is that?

For facilitators of the young filmmakers project described in the case study above, the most important measure of success was that participants returned to school or took up vocational training and employment. Participation in community cultural production can produce confidence and skills which are valuable beyond arts networks.

Limitations and challenges

Despite the ambitious aims of CCD and the positive feedback from practitioners and participants, there is very little independent research into the effectiveness of community cultural development. Lena Nahlous argues that the evaluation of CCD projects is always difficult, asking: 'how do we measure self-esteem or a collective sense of autonomy and power?' (2006:6). On a practical level, the logic of funding applications mitigates against documenting or analysing difficulties or failures, while more generally practitioners find 'less and less space to reflect on practice' (ibid:7). There is also a 'doubleness' to the work of CCD, as 'some of the most interesting and vital aspects of community-based cultural projects lie beyond the objectives that can be stated in a list of bullet points in a funding application' (Rose in Nahlous 2006:6). The peak body for NSW, CCDNSW, has recently produced a resource kit on evaluating CCD projects (CCDNSW 2006).

Advocates of Community Cultural Development also stress that CCD should not be understood as welfare, and practitioners must constantly argue for the artistic and social value of CCD processes and outcomes. Practitioners stress that CCD processes contribute to community sustainability and must therefore be supported and given legitimacy (Vieceli 2006:19). As the federal arts funding body, the Australia Council, has linked CCD to wellbeing, Abood argues that 'participatory creative processes' can enable governments to more effectively incorporate community culture and values into policies and strategies (2006:25 – 26). Nahlous argues that CCD can 'engage new collective needs, work through thorny problems in cultural politics, and highlight emerging voices' (2006:7). Yet CCD practice and production is often sidelined, not least through the 2005 restructure of the Australia Council itself, or by comparison to the elite arts.

One of the key achievements of community cultural development work has been to create what was repeatedly called a 'safe space' for targeted communities to explore the impacts of September 11, 2001 and the 'war on terror'. While Arab and Muslim Australians have often found mainstream media to be hostile and have felt insecure in public space (ADB 2003, HREOC 2004, Dreher 2006), CCD projects were acknowledged as enabling communities experiencing racism to work through issues and develop responses without fear of harassment. As with all community response projects, the challenge of reaching wider audiences remains a crucial concern, as 'raising your voice to draw attention to social injustice is difficult when there is no audience' (Abood 2006:33).

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING COMMUNITY ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIES

In addition to analysing specific anti-racism projects, this research has also identified three key principles which underpin successful community response strategies. This section draws on interviews with representatives of NSW State government departments as well as community organisations and workers. There was broad agreement among both community and government interviewees on the importance of community capacity building, partnerships and sustainability as organising principles for ongoing anti-racism and community relations work. Consultations also identified funding and evaluation as two of the central challenges facing community anti-racism work.

Principle 1: Community capacity building

Capacity building has been widely used as a conceptual term in issues and research that deals with communities. This contested term has generated many definitions referring to the degree to which a community can develop, implement and sustain actions which allow it to exert greater control over its physical, economic, social and cultural domains (Potapchuk et al. 2005: 19-25). This requires the ability of individuals and communities to work collectively to foster and sustain positive change. Working with the Assyrian Australian community in western Sydney, Greg Gow has developed a definition which highlights the key features relevant to this report:

Community capacity building is about enabling people to develop their individual and collective potential as contributing members of society. The verb 'building' highlights that it is a process which involves training, resourcing and supporting people. The aim is to develop the skills and capabilities of community members so they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs. Ideally, service providers play the roles of facilitators and catalysts, who support community-driven efforts to build capacity. In this way community capacity building is about multi-layered and integrated partnerships. (2005)

As a principle underpinning community anti-racism work, community capacity building emphasises skills transfer and the development of capabilities for self-determination and full participation in all aspects of social life. Activities and outcomes should be community identified, with community workers and service providers working in partnership.

Community building approaches are built on principles of cooperative problem solving, collaboration and common enterprise. However, these practices must be situated in a framework that critically looks at the historical, socio-economic, political, cultural and geographical contexts that communities are located within. As such, community building bears important connections to community organising and community development but within an emphasis on the democratic involvement and participation of the community (Cavaye :2006). Community building projects are typically based on a set of ideas about how the world works and what it takes to change circumstances for people in the community or to change the place itself (CBNSW 2006).

Although community organisations and individual community workers consulted for this research wanted to be more proactive in their response to the climate of increased fear and racism, the ability of community organisations to be proactive in initiating and staffing community response projects was undermined by the limited resources and capacity of community organisations. One

community worker commented that community organisations simply 'lurch from crisis to crisis', while a community representative stated:

We have tried to be proactive [but we] have to react also because things get thrown at you ... but that's not all we want to do. We want to initiate projects and relationships.

A reoccurring theme in the community consultations was the importance of building community capacity in order to initiate and implement long-term strategies. One interviewee stressed the need to:

...develop the community's capacity to stand on their feet so they don't always feel that they have to depend on others to speak out for them. We would like to see communities reach a stage where they are able to access and acquire knowledge and skills to work for and speak for the community and to build that bridge between government and the rest of community.

Several projects explicitly incorporated capacity building principles, such as a community cultural development program for young Arab Australian filmmakers which emphasises skills and confidence building to enable the participants to return to formal education or to enter the workforce.

Community interviewees were also involved in projects with a specific community capacity building focus, including: providing resources to empower communities; and training community members with skills to initiate and deliver community response projects. Improving the ability of community members to engage with the media was also seen as a vital part of community capacity building, as discussed above.

Information and resources

One popular form of community building is civic action to improve quality of life or promote social justice. In the context of anti-racist projects, capacity building becomes a useful tool to simultaneously enact positive changes within marginalised communities as well as addressing hierarchies and power relations (Aspen Institute 2005:35-38). Projects typically involved the provision of information and resources to community members. One program targeted an 'economically deprived area' where for Muslim women 'isolation is the major problem'. Through their participation in project activities, project coordinators report that Muslim women developed networks in the wider community and improved their self-esteem, taking part in workshops on body image and self-defence.

Other projects aimed to improve participants understanding of their legal and political rights:

[The project] aimed to improve the capacity for ordinary people – in this case Muslim women – to be involved in the political process. It's about fostering participation and not just a feeling of helplessness. Because I think that feeling is very dangerous and I think it is prevalent in the community at the moment

Volunteers

The capacity to respond to a climate of increased threat and fear depends on communities' ability to mobilise volunteers. This reliance on volunteers was seen by some interviewees as unsustainable in the long-term:

The organisation is all volunteers. [It is] currently manageable as volunteers. To be long term we would need to have full time workers, eventually.

In a national survey of interfaith work in Australia, Cahill et al (2004:90) found only one salaried worker, concluding that this 'vital work is reliant on volunteers'. A key objective of building community capacity was to enable community organisations to initiate strategic responses and increase the number of people within the community who can run community response projects. A number of interviewees stated that building community capacity involved a greater government commitment to training and to employing community workers:

Who is best capable of addressing those [community] needs? Community organisations who understand their community at the grass roots and have the trust and credibility to deliver those services. If you want to develop and empower communities that requires committing resources, funding and training.

While community consultation indicates a strong belief that the community needs to become better equipped to respond to crises, the same participants stressed that the responsibility for responding shouldn't be shouldered by community organisations alone. Support is crucial:

Communities need to be supported in crisis. People really mean well in their requests, but we are so inundated. We need a pool of people.

This 'pool of people' included government representatives and departments, schools, religious leaders, other community organisations, local councils and media workers.

Principle 2: Partnerships

Partnerships were widely understood as a key principle for expanding networks, developing 'pools of people' involved in responding to racism beyond targeted communities. Some of the most successful community response projects were developed within partnerships with other community organisations or with government agencies.

Partnerships across communities

Community response projects that facilitated partnerships with other community organisations or groups were viewed as positive because they increased understanding and strengthened community networks. One community representative stressed 'the relationships need to be ongoing'. The relationships formed between community organisations and participants were viewed by some interviewees as the most important outcome of community response projects.

Interviewees gave positive feedback about community response projects that were conducted in partnership with schools and universities. Racism in schools and campaigns targeting schools were

seen as important. Community response projects typically encouraged the distribution of project resources and publications in schools. Community capacity building in media skills were conducted in partnership with universities and media professionals.

Partnerships with government

There was also a widespread agreement that there was a need for partnerships between government agencies and community organisations if more effective responses to a crisis in community relations were to be developed. While interviewees in community consultations supported the principle of partnerships between communities and government, they also argued that partnerships need to empower communities and should recognise that community organisations are under-resourced in comparison to government departments:

Community projects need government support. Partnership requires recognising that we both have a responsibility and we both need the appropriate resources. The community provides intelligent advice and guidance to government but the government also needs to invest its resources into community service provisions. Who is best capable of addressing those needs? Community organisations who understand their community at the grassroots and have the trust and the credibility to deliver those services.

Projects need to come from communities rather than being arbitrarily imposed from above.

The government is scared of helping the community become advocates of change.

Interviewees also explained that trust is a key factor in partnerships and it takes time to build relationships and trust. Building better partnerships between Government and the community was a reoccurring theme in the community consultations. One community consultation participant believed partnership programs were undermined by political rhetoric:

They're getting half Australia on their side by saying yeah, all the wogs, all the Arabs are scum and they're terrorists and they try and get the Arabs on side by saying yeah we'll give you \$10 000 to try and do some stuff.

Another interviewee commented that when Government undertakes partnership projects it needs to recognise the limited resources of community organisations:

We would have benefited from greater clarity regarding the responsibilities of the community partner. In particular, it wasn't made clear that the community project, which is the major part of the program in terms of time and cost would be fully paid for and resourced by the sponsor organisation. We felt that this was an unrealistic expectation of a non-profit community organisation ... that is limited in terms of its funding and resources.

One community organisation felt that government partnership programs failed to target the sections of the community that most needed help. In this case, the community organisation intervened to redirect the partnership program towards the young people that the community organisation believed were most in need of assistance.

The value of existing partnerships

Both government and community interviewees stressed that responses to September 11, 2001 and the Bali bombings have built upon networks, interactions, trust, policies and programs that have been previously developed in NSW through the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW and the Youth Partnership with Arabic Speaking Young People steered by the Premier's Department. The Youth Partnership advised other government departments, and developed longer-term leadership development strategies with youth. The most important avenue for government / community interchange proved to be the Community Harmony Reference Group (CHRG), established by the CRC in 2002 and wound down in 2003. The CHRG was perceived by all parties involved as being of great value – and its demise removed a valuable arena of collaboration and knowledge sharing:

The CHRG had communities under incredible stress and threat working together. It was important for all agencies to sit around the one table, and work together on a project basis.

The Community Harmony Reference Group sustained an environment for partnerships and collaborations. Some interviewees said that their awareness of what was achieved by the Community Harmony Reference Group was inadequate. Interviewees suggested better reporting of CHRG outcomes to both government and community participants. Two interviewees recommended a recall of the CHRG to present research findings.

Existing partnerships enable a timely and effective response to crises in community relations. The ability to respond depends on long-term programs and partnerships being in place. Intensive programs and proactive linkages require long term funding and commitment but produce very important outcomes. Government responses to September 11, 2001 suggest the value of community strengthening and relationship building both for preventing community relations tensions and for developing a strong foundation from which to react to crises as they arise. Programs must be ongoing rather than incident-specific. An overarching strategic policy document which outlines the lessons learned from September 11, 2001 would enable effective future responses.

Building trust and relationships with community organisations is vital to the success of government response projects. Community consultations must take account of the diversity of communities and the skills and resources of community organisations. Government responses would benefit from training in community liaison for staff involved.

Community representatives argued that government needs to recognise the limited resources of community 'partners'. It is important to do more than merely initiate projects, and there is a need to focus on sustainability by supporting projects throughout their duration and to provide funding for initiatives which arise out of partnerships. Interviewees explained that a whole of government response to the crisis in community relations after September 11, 2001 was possible only because the Youth Partnership was already in place as a key coordinating mechanism in relation to the Arabic speaking community. Without proper communication and consultation, relations can disintegrate very quickly, and a key lesson learned is 'to stay closely engaged with the community, to listen to

them, to make ourselves available to them, to maintain an open door policy'. Communities also have a responsibility to engage in partnerships and dialogue.

Working in partnership has been a steep learning curve for government. There has been a major shift in the Youth Partnership departments such as Sport and Recreation in terms of cultural diversity strategies. Through working in partnership with a diverse community, departments have learned in a very different way compared to cross-cultural training within an organisation. Training works best if it is supported through ongoing partnerships as action learning.

Partnerships are expensive and labour intensive upfront, but in the midterm and long term, costs are being saved. There are efficiencies in working in collaborative, cross-sector ways. It is important to frame partnerships in terms of the wellbeing and welfare of young people rather than any punitive message or goal.

Problem-solving partnerships

Partnerships were seen to be most effective when organised around a shared task or problem-solving, particularly where the partnerships arose out of community-identified needs and incorporated capacity building principles for all stakeholders. Interviewees felt that government departments involved in partnerships have been on a learning journey, producing a sea change in attitudes among key government personnel. Partnership builds trust among key players and changes the perspectives of those having to solve the problems. Partnerships were also seen as a highly effective way to break down barriers and build understanding and relationships. Often these were implicit rather than explicit goals, suggesting that collaborative effort to address community needs and aspirations can contribute to the stated aims of much anti-racism and cultural awareness training.

Public comments by senior figures in government can also seriously set back the process of building relationships between communities and government. Participants in the Youth Partnership heard interesting feedback from the community about having their trust in the government built up, then shattered, built up and shattered again and again. Through the partnership process politicians were exposed to the complexity and volatility of community relations issues and the importance of perceptions for both affected groups and the wider community.

Principle 3: Sustainability

Both community capacity building and partnerships can be seen as vital ingredients for the overall goal of sustainability in community anti-racism work. Sustainability can refer to activities that do not reduce the overall stock of resources in an area, or it can refer to the long-term viability of an activity in its own right (DFW 2002:9-10), and both senses were evident in the research consultations. Interviewees discussed the importance of maintaining the human resources needed for anti-racism work – paid and unpaid labour, passion and commitment, skills and expertise, as well as the need for longer-term strategies. There was an agreement that there was a need for ongoing and long term community relations building. Interviewees said that building community relations requires long-term planning and ongoing commitments from government:

We need long-term commitments. There needs to be a follow-on. This is not going to go away, it is our daily reality.

Crisis management plans are important, but there needs to be a focus on addressing racism within agencies.

One-off events were seen as band aids without ongoing support for programs arising out of the event. Government interviewees also fear that long-term projects need to be maintained setting a high priority for resources and funds. As the crisis moment passes, programs shift and become routinised and some fear that they will drop down the broader list of departmental priorities, thus facing cut backs in resources and support.

People involved in developing community response strategies were asked about what could be done to ensure better projects in the future. At times of crisis community organisations need to juggle immediate responses and ongoing programs and service delivery:

Responding and responding and responding and not having time to stop and plan and think about what you actually need in the long term because you're just inundated with needs that need to be dealt with now.

Interviewees said that response projects need to facilitate long-term planning while ensuring communities have the resources to react to crisis events. Project sustainability was a key concern for community interviewees, who suggested the need for training and skills development for participants in response projects:

Hopefully we'll be able to pass it onto other people who we will train. It will continue because it's something that's necessary. Even if things get better in Australia just in general for the whole Australian community this is something which is necessary – you need an alternative.

A community organisation which found that there were no qualified Muslim community workers in their area negotiated for a trainee position as part of a Muslim women's public safety project.

Many community interviewees argued that greater funding is required for community organisations involved in response projects. A community representative commented that after September 11:

Given that there were only limited resources that the community had access to a lot of the time the community felt extremely paralysed in its ability to address the issues and extremely frustrated at the silence of some government departments in addressing the real issues post September 11.

Volunteers who had developed an ongoing publication at a leadership camp felt that government funding would help the project to become more sustainable.

While sustainability is an important principle for community anti-racism work, it is important to acknowledge that activities which fit the criteria for sustainability may yet be undesirable, and sustainability must be coupled to notions of empowerment, participation, equity, justice and difference (DFW: 10). Recent work in this area advocates wariness about the values of harmony and balance which underpin discourses of sustainability, arguing for a need to 'leave space for

irresolvable community conflict, for mediation – including symbolic, economic, subjective, historical, and emotional mediation – and for the culturally creative and life affirming place of imbalance and disharmony’ (DFW:11).

Common challenges

As well as identifying the underlying principles of community capacity building, partnerships and sustainability, interviewees discussed evaluation and funding as common challenges in community anti-racism work after September 11, 2001.

Evaluation

Participants in the community consultations were asked how they measure a successful project. Participant feedback was seen as an important way of measuring success. Organisers of cultural awareness and community capacity building seminars felt that evaluations were a good way to measure the increased understanding of the participants: ‘They’ve said they’ve learnt things which is great’. For another organisation the development, printing and distribution of information resources was the best measure.

A youth worker queried the use of evaluation forms, commenting that: ‘there is an enormous disparity between what people write and what goes on’. Other interviewees suggested a range of criteria for evaluation, including evaluation forms and community feedback. Despite the limitations of quantitative measures, participation or ‘going by the numbers’ was commonly viewed as an important criteria in evaluating the success of the project:

You can always look at the turnout – if the turnout is good it shows that people are interested. If you are reaching out to people and they’ve heard about you and they’re coming that’s good.

However, a youth worker commented that such measures could not capture the most important outcomes of projects:

We measure [success] as a sense of what people got out of the project, not as a quantitative thing. You can’t measure the success of a project by statistics – it’s not about the number of hits on a website.

Another community worker argued that evaluation of long term outcomes is paramount:

A successful project can be measured by long-term outcomes. A successful project is one that empowers people throughout the community, particularly women and children to become advocates for their community to identify their needs and to identify projects and strategies that will address those needs.

Obtaining positive media coverage was seen by some interviewees as a crucial component of a successful project, and in one instance negative media coverage had a damaging impact on the project.

Interviewees believed in the importance of evaluating partnership projects with government, and one community organisation provided a ‘really through evaluation’ of a community/government

partnership although it was not requested. Some interviewees expressed scepticism about the evaluation process for partnerships with government agencies:

I think we can see that not much is being done even if we do evaluate. After the Leadership camp there was an evaluation coordinated by the program leaders and so we did an evaluation that the government needs to be more actively involved [and provide ongoing support] but that was where it stopped. So there was an evaluation but the purpose of an evaluation is to change and improve things and we didn't see the change or improvement.

Overall people involved in response projects felt that more thorough evaluations would identify models for better future projects:

Funding bodies also need to provide resources to do long-term evaluations of what are successful models of working with communities and what aren't successful projects.

Funding

The funding process for community response projects was seen as complex and time consuming. Some community interviewees said that they had not submitted funding applications as they found the process daunting. A community worker who had been on advisory committees for funding bodies commented:

It is really problematic for communities when you have a 20 page application form and you have to communicate in a particular way to that committee to sell your idea. It's a lot of pressure, it's a burden especially on new emerging communities ... it sets up people to fail and community workers and advocates need to be there to provide support in enabling communities to be successful in getting funding otherwise all the established communities, the old hacks are the ones that get the funding and the new communities get left out unless they're the flavour of the month.

Interviewees felt that community capacity to respond to crisis was impeded by the lengthy process of applying for and obtaining funding. One community worker suggested the community would be better equipped to respond to crisis if there was 'short and discretionary funding' set aside for emergency projects. Short funding turnover times could also enable long-term community projects developed on one-off events or camps to begin promptly.

LESSONS LEARNED AND REFLECTIONS

This chapter outlines the key lessons learned from community workers and policymakers involved in developing strategies to respond to racism directed at Muslim, Arab and Sikh communities after September 11, 2001 and provides reflections drawing on contemporary academic debates. The discussion moves from those lessons commonly identified by interviewees to an analysis of the wider political and policy context.

Long term planning, crisis support structures

Sustainability is a crucial challenge for community response strategies. Community workers are tired of lurching from crisis to crisis and want support and funding to develop long-term proactive strategies. Sustainability is a crucial challenge for community response strategies. High profile events or initiatives should be coupled with longer term projects. Combining crisis response and ongoing programs requires partnerships with government and other community organisations, adequate funding and community capacity building.

Government interviewees felt that the timeliness of responses is vital, but long term planning is also required. An interviewee suggested that 'we need to have a strategic policy from the top down that clearly spells out the lessons learned from things like September 11, 2001'. Others felt that more inter-cultural work is required, rather than focusing on specific communities. While interviewees agreed on the need for mid-term and long-term thinking, a policymaker argued that 'it is hard to get funding for those. Complex social development initiatives take 10 to 15 years to produce real changes in communities'. Planning and sustainable time frames are important. The most valuable programs are practical training and support initiatives such as youth leadership, community capacity building, media skills, issues management, and programs with multiplier effects in terms of train the trainer.

Better partnerships

Partnerships between government and community are seen as desirable but the terms of the relationships need to be rethought. Government needs to recognise the limited resources of community 'partners'. A whole of government approach is critical. Interviewees recognise the importance of the Premier's imprimatur on policy and programmes and the value of coordinating whole of government responses through the Premier's Department. It is important to do more than merely initiate projects, and there is a need to focus on sustainability by supporting projects throughout their duration and to provide funding for initiatives which arise out of partnerships. Overall people involved in response projects said that stronger relationships both between community groups and between government and community would contribute to improved response strategies and better outcomes.

Need for recognition and support for community work

Community interviewees argued that community organisations require greater support and encouragement as they make a significant contribution to community relations in NSW and rely heavily on volunteer contributions:

Community workers and organisations need more encouragement by government bodies. A lot of what we are doing is volunteer work, because we want a harmonious community. The government benefits from that also, so it would be nice to have more encouragement and support.

The organisation has limited administrative resources to fight such matters in a strong and consistent manner. Community volunteers who are already trying to manage and balance their work and family lives run the organisation.

Community-focused government organisations need to do more to assist emerging communities such as the Sikh community. Communities need to contribute, but governments need to step in when communities find hindrances to reach their full potential to contribute to strengthen a diverse and vibrant Australia.

Media strategies

The question of how to engage and respond to the media was a key issue in all community response strategies. Interviewees felt that responsibility for responding to sensationalised news reporting should not sit only with targeted communities. However, communities are keen to build media skills instead of relying on other people to speak for them. There is also a risk that the pressure to produce positive images will result in the more difficult issues being avoided.

Mainstream media reporting of community relations has a significant impact on government responses and partnerships working to build community relations. Policymakers and frontline personnel working on community relations issues perceive that the task has been made much more difficult by some sensationalist media reporting. There is a widespread perception that media reporting is one of the most important factors in community relations, and also one of the most difficult issues to address. The Community Harmony Reference Group also noted the crucial role the media plays in crisis situations, so that better media relations are a necessary part of good community relations. The CHRG identified the media as the most difficult factor to influence (CHRG 2003). Effective and sustained media liaison is required beyond moments of crisis.

Community capacity building

There is a strong felt need for community capacity building projects, particularly those with employment outcomes for participants. Community response projects are heavily reliant on volunteers and on overstretched community organisations. Skills development and employment assistance is vital to develop sustainable community relations work, while training and traineeships are crucial to developing capacity. There is also an urgent need for people involved in community anti-racism work to be able to access the training, intellectual resources and time for reflection required to develop appropriate strategies and to draw on the vast literature and past experiences of anti-racism work. This requires employment and education opportunities beyond the practical work of specific projects so that those working with targeted communities might better learn both from other practitioners and from research in the field.

The volunteers that are required for community anti-racism work are those from any community that are prepared to volunteer in a professional capacity to provide skills training for community

organisations. Interviewees suggested that a reference group of relevant professionals would be helpful, but 'we have to be realistic about it – there aren't too many professionals out there that would help'. Programs such as those for volunteers abroad and volunteers in Australian Indigenous communities might provide models for ways in which individuals with highly developed skills can contribute to skills transfer and capacity building for Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities experiencing racism.

Policy context

Community anti-racism strategies have been developed in a context in which multicultural policy has moved away from an explicit commitment to anti-racism, and towards a liberal pluralist model, with its assumption that racism is a product of individual prejudice and misunderstanding that can be addressed through dialogue. The 'harmony' framework developed by DIMA in particular sidelines the concept of racism, individualising social relations rather than looking at structural issues of power, for example, how racism is institutionalised within society (Ho and Dreher 2006).

Furthermore, in response to funding and policy changes, NGOs generally have moved from strategies of contestation and advocacy to developing partnerships with government. While most interviewees were supportive of such partnerships, there were also concerns at the decline in advocacy and the silencing of dissent among community organisations.

Limitations of dialogue

The limitations of the 'harmony' agenda are reflected in the prevalence of strategies of dialogue, interaction and understanding. Dialogue assumes the existence of a level playing field, neglecting the inequalities in privilege and power that inevitably exist among interlocutors. Researchers working on antiracist education have long warned of 'the embedded power relations and the parasitic nature of dialogue in anti-racism workshops' (Dei 1996:262). A focus on individual prejudice and awareness fails to address larger social and political concerns. Anti-racism research also highlights the limitations of individual outcomes of self-esteem and empowerment in addressing the persistent structures of racism.

Attracting audiences

Across the strategies identified in this report, there is a tension between tackling difficult issues and engaging an audience. This is evident in the common concern that anti-racism strategies are merely 'preaching to the converted', but also in more specific concerns, such as the perceived need to avoid contentious issues in Interfaith dialogue, or the frustration that CCD projects enable participants to speak on their own terms, but usually to small audiences. Interviewees commonly expressed a desire for more participants and for more diverse audiences to be involved in anti-racism work. Beyond the practical concerns of developing effective projects, this tension points to a wider context of disinterest or denial beyond targeted communities when it comes to addressing racism. This can be read as a lack of care, concern and responsibility within 'mainstream' Australia for addressing racism.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

This research highlights the extent and diversity of community anti-racism strategies in NSW after September 11, 2001. In the context of widespread fear documented in the *'Targeted'* report, many individuals and organisations have been involved in programs and projects which aim to face up to fear, to challenge racism and prejudice, and to contribute to better relationships between diverse communities. Interfaith has emerged as the most common response strategy, while the prevalence of media strategies reflects the widespread concern at the impacts of media representation recorded by the CRC Hotline, community consultations and academic analyses (Dreher 2005, HREOC 2004, Dunn 2003, Manning 2003). There has also been considerable involvement in community cultural development work, due at least in part to the perceived need to tell different stories, while many organisations have reported a huge demand for cross-cultural awareness training.

A central dimension emerging from the research is the importance of the trust relationship between government, community organisations and the wider community. Partnerships work well, as does the investment of high quality resources in leadership development. Government/community partnerships were seen as central to maintaining community relations and building social capital. Shared tasks and goals are vital to the success of partnerships, and long term projects and shared commitments to change are far more effective than high profile one off events. Partnerships can also address some of the huge unmet demand for capacity building within targeted communities. Government interviewees involved in partnerships agreed with many of the key findings to emerge from the community consultations.

Both community and government responses to racism after September 11, 2001 have been heavily reliant on the generosity of the very individuals and communities experiencing increased fear and harassment. For community workers, doing anti-racism and crisis response work detracts from core business activities such as service delivery, case management, advocacy and community development. Interviewees report that 'racism creates a lot of work for community organisations' at precisely the time when staff and clients are most under stress. Most community anti-racism work remains under-resourced and dependent on volunteer and unpaid labour. To ensure equitable, effective and sustainable responses to crises in community relations, it is vital that the work of crisis response and strengthening community relations is not left to the very communities targeted. There is an urgent need for community organisations, business, government and NGOs beyond the communities experiencing racism to shoulder the responsibilities and challenges of responding to racism and building just community relations. This requires power-sensitive partnerships, where targeted communities can be part of developing constructive solutions.

Beyond the value of partnerships and longer term responses, the research has revealed the importance of issues of representation for community anti-racism work. Community Cultural Development has been one of the most popular response strategies, due in part to a perception that communities impacted by September 11, 2001 need different spaces and innovative ways to tell their stories. Community workers feel a particular need to respond to stereotypes and misconceptions about young Arab and Muslim Australians. Media skills were also identified as very important development needs by both community and government interviewees. The strong desire to tell stories and to change perceptions through representation suggests a need for recognition,

acknowledgement and validation which mirrors recent research findings that a lack of care, concern or civility are a key cause of the hurt and harm experienced by targeted communities. Where Noble (2005) has highlighted the impacts of banal or everyday racism in producing feelings of discomfort and insecurity among Arab and Muslim Australians after September 11, 2001, community anti-racism strategies of media and cultural production claim recognition and respect within the public sphere of representations. Invisibility or misrepresentation in the mainstream media and the arts thus functions as a lack of concern which both produces and amplifies a lack of belonging.

This overview of interfaith, education, media and CCD strategies developed after September 11, 2001 provides considerable evidence that targeted communities are reaching out and contributing invaluable resources, efforts and expertise for anti-racism and community relations work. At a time when Muslim Australians in particular are regularly called upon to 'integrate' and to explain and justify aspects of their religion and cultures, this research highlights the enormous efforts that many in the Muslim, Arab and Sikh communities have made to address fears and misconceptions, to work through dialogue and partnership and to build better relationships across differences.

The many projects and strategies developed by targeted communities to respond to the climate of pervasive racism operate within a wider social, political and funding context in which there has been a retreat from the discourse of anti-racism, and denials of the existence of racism in Australia are common. Community anti-racism work after September 11, 2001 reveals both the possibilities and the limitations of the community 'harmony' agenda for responding to racism in Australia. At its most simplistic, the harmony agenda reflects a 'bland utopianism' (see Wetherell and Potter 1998:201), which suggests easy solutions and obscures the need for deeper analysis and change. It does not necessarily provide the tools for dealing with the difficult and messy business of confronting privilege and systemic change, for examining questions of equity, of representation, and of how institutions should respond to the challenges of diversity and difference (Dei 1996:255). Where anti-racism aims to transform the repressive, ideological, intersubjective and social means of the reproduction of racism, the discourse of 'harmony' and dialogue limits strategies to the level of the intersubjective.

Despite many successes, most people involved in community anti-racism work remain frustrated at what is seen as a lack of interest among the public, policymakers and media, and the dilemma of 'preaching to the converted'. Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities may well be reaching out, but that effort has been met with uneven concern and commitment among the wider community and mainstream institutions. While the projects analysed here have produced significant outcomes, the wider aims of anti-racism require greater commitment to addressing the social and political dimensions beyond individual prejudices and knowledge. A crucial challenge remaining is to shift the focus of understanding from awareness of diversity and cultural differences, to understanding structure and the culture of the 'mainstream'. Innovative work in anti-racism education and the emerging interest in analysing whiteness suggest productive possibilities to move the onus of explanation and change from targeted communities. In the face of a widespread indifference, denial or silence in the face of racism targeting Muslim and Arab Australians, the challenge is to confront those Australians who do not see themselves as implicated either in racism or in responding to racism.

The challenge for community anti-racism work that emerges from this research is not a need to speak up, but rather a need to be heard. The desire for dialogue and storytelling that underpins the four strategies analysed here demands of those beyond targeted communities an ethics of listening and a commitment to hearing uncomfortable truths. There is ample scope for innovative anti-racism work that will develop new spaces for hearing and listening, where the concerns of targeted communities can be heard on their own terms rather than mediated through the fears of the 'mainstream'. Yet developing 'ears that hear' (Jones 1999) is a challenge and a responsibility for those who are not targeted by racism. Many of the limitations of contemporary community antiracism work outlined in this report can be addressed only if institutions and individuals beyond targeted communities take responsibility for addressing racism. This requires willingness to address difficult issues as well as commonalities, and engaging with anger and frustration as well as calls for harmony.

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INTERVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS

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- Community Relations Commission for a multicultural New South Wales
- NSW Department of Community Services
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Police
- NSW Premier's Department

Community organisations:

- Affinity Intercultural Association – Ms Zuleyha Keskin
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- Australian Sikh Association – Mr Inderjeet Singh Viridi, Education Coordinator
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- Bankstown Youth Development Services
- Chester Hill High School – Ross Pearce, Principal and Sharryn Brownlee, P and C President
- Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations – Kuranda Seyit, Executive Director of Communications
- Foundation of Islamic Studies and Information – Imam Amin Hady, Chairman
- Goodness and Kindness
- CRC Hotline staffers
- Information and Cultural Exchange
- Illawarra Muslim Women's Association
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- Muslim Women's National Network of Australia
- Reflections Magazine, supported by the United Muslim Women Association of NSW
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