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Media Statement

Increasing community awareness of discrimination against Aboriginals

Aboriginal people were identified as the most frequently mentioned group of people likely to be discriminated against in a recent community survey of WA residents.

“Forty six percent of those surveyed identified Aboriginal people as discriminated against with an equal number also identifying non-English speaking people as suffering discrimination”, WA Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Yvonne Henderson said today.

“This is an increase in both these categories compared with a similar survey in 2006”, she said

Ms Henderson said these figures accorded with ongoing complaints of racial discrimination in relation to employment and access to accommodation, public places and goods and services.

The Commission deals with a steady number of complaints from Aboriginal people in relation to their treatment at work, in accessing rental accommodation and in retail establishments.

Ms Henderson said it was encouraging that there was an increasing awareness of the problem which was likely to assist in changing attitudes to discrimination.

“An awareness that some people get unfair treatment simply because of their race is the first step towards stamping out this kind of discrimination” she said.

“Eighty formal complaints from Aboriginal people of discrimination were dealt with during 2008-09.” Ms Henderson said.

“This represents 13% of all complaints compared with Aboriginal people comprising approximately 3% of the population,” she said.

The Patterson Market Research community survey canvassed 402 respondents, with 300 from the Perth metro area and 102 from country WA.

**FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT: Commissioner Yvonne Henderson
(08) 9216 3954 or mobile number 0409 880 544**

Level 2, 141 St Georges Terrace, Western Australia 6000 - Tel: (08) 9216 3900 - Fax: (08) 9216 3960
Email: eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au Website www.eoc.wa.gov.au