



MEDIA RELEASE

Public inquiry to help end racial discrimination in policing

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Smart Justice for Young People welcomes news of the settlement announced in the racial discrimination action in the Federal Court between Victoria Police and six young African Australian men.

Allegations by these young men (that formed the basis of their original complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission) of regularly being stopped by police for no legitimate policing reason, being subjected to racial discrimination, including assaults, racial taunts and abuse, and racial profiling are commonly made by other young people. However such complaints are not often investigated due to lack of an independent, effective complaint system or a fear of retribution.

"These young men deserve to be acknowledged as true champions of justice...", said Tamar Hopkins, Principal Solicitor at Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre, who jointly represented the young complainants with Arnold Bloch Leibler.

"They have stood up to what they and their community maintain has been years of ongoing and systemic racial discrimination meted out by Victoria Police."

Part of the historic agreement reached between Victoria Police and the young men involves the Victorian general public being invited to take part in an important Victoria Police inquiry that will examine Victoria Police policy on person checks (including their use of stop and search powers) and their cross-cultural training system.

A public report will be prepared by the end of the year outlining proposed actions police will take in response to the inquiry.

"The inquiry represents an exciting opportunity for Victoria Police, the general community and minority groups to work together to stamp out the systemic issue of policing involving racial discrimination. We encourage everyone to participate." Tiffany Overall, spokesperson for Smart Justice for Young People said.

For further comment contact Tiffany Overall: 9611 2422, tiffany@youthlaw.asn.au

Smart Justice for Young People represents over 30 organisations from the youth, legal and community sectors advocating for smart, evidence-based approaches to youth justice.