Media Statement

Thursday 25 February 2021

Statement on alleged attack on First Nations woman

A statement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar AO:

"My heart goes out to the First Nations woman and her daughter who were allegedly attacked on Saturday by a man displaying white supremacist insignia in Perth. A racially-motivated attack is not only a physical assault, it is an attempt to terrorise people for who they are and an attempt to undermine the shared values that hold our democracy together.

"The trauma caused by attacks such as that which has been alleged can have acute and long-lasting impacts and I hope that this woman and her daughter are receiving all the support they need to heal and to help them feel safe in their community.

"To address the growing threat of racially-motivated violence, we cannot take comfort in the false belief that they are isolated acts committed by 'bad apples'. If we are to respond effectively we must acknowledge that crimes of this nature exist on a spectrum of racially discriminatory thought and action—both conscious and unconscious—that is widespread and pervades Australian institutions and society.

"It is imperative that urgent and serious attention is given to this issue. The Race Discrimination Commissioner Chin Tan has developed a proposed National Anti-Racism Framework and is in discussion with government about it. The time is well overdue for government to fully support and fund a nationwide and adequately-resourced plan of action to eradicate racism in Australia."

Additional statement from Race Discrimination Commissioner Chin Tan:

"This attack is an appalling example of racism targeting a First Nations woman and her daughter. The community is united in condemning the attack and standing against all forms of racism. It underlines the need for serious action to tackle the growing threat that racism poses to Indigenous and multicultural communities in Australia."