



Podcast Title:

COVID-19 and discrimination – Your rights and responsibilities.

Podcast Script:

Hi I'm Michelle Parker and I work at Equal Opportunity Tasmania. Today on this podcast I'm going to have a talk with one of my colleagues Gemma Misrachi about some of the discrimination issues that might come up about the COVID-19 pandemic.

There have been so many changes to our lives in the past 2 months, Gemma can you tell me, have people's rights under the Tasmanian anti-discrimination law changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Compliance with Tasmanian anti-discrimination law has not changed – people are still protected and have the right to lodge a complaint with Equal Opportunity Tasmania if they feel discriminated against.
- Complying with this law is not a choice.

Can you give me some examples of unlawful discrimination that might be related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Unfortunately we have seen a rise in complaints and enquiries of racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular people from Asia or Chinese backgrounds have been targeted in shops and in the streets and exposed to racial abuse and even assault. We know this is due to the pandemic because we have reports that people have been told to go home and have been blamed for bringing coronavirus to Australia.

Some other examples of discrimination based on COVID-19 include refusing to rent a property to someone because of their race or because they have COVID-19, not providing adequate support to someone with disability, by wrongly relying on COVID-19 restrictions, and reducing someone's work hours or terminating someone's employment because they have COVID-19, their partner has COVID-19 or is presumed to have COVID-19 because they are a health care worker or completed a period of quarantine.

What responsibilities do people have during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- People have a responsibility not to discriminate, engage in offensive or humiliating conduct or incite hatred towards others because of race or disability. Disability includes a presumed disability, such as COVID-19.
- People must follow with new laws and restrictions that have been put in place during the pandemic.

My last question for you Gemma is if I think I might have been discriminated against or I want more information, what should I do?

I would encourage people to contact our office and have a confidential chat to one of the investigation and conciliation officers. We can provide free information about lodging a complaint, or give you a referral to another organisation.

To contact us you can call us on (03) 6165 7515 or 1300 305 062 - cost of a local call in Tasmania.

You can send us an e-mail at office@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au or visit our website for information: www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au