



MEDIA STATEMENT

15 October 2018

Reports of racist comments and graffiti targeting individuals standing for election in local government elections

There have been reports of racist comments and graffiti targeting individuals standing for election in local government elections.

Such conduct discloses possible breaches of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas) (the Act).

The Act prohibits:

- discrimination on the basis of race;
- conduct that offends, humiliates, intimidates, insults or ridicules a person on the basis of race; and
- incitement to hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule on the basis of race.

The Anti-Discrimination Commissioner calls on anyone with information about who is responsible for racist graffiti on candidates' election signs to come forward. The more information the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner has about this, the better able she is to take action in progressing complaints under the Act, and working with Tasmania Police.

Any person who has been affected by negative comments about their race, skin colour, or where they are from, is able to report it or make a formal complaint under the Act. This may be a candidate, or any other person who has been affected by such conduct.

Racism and discriminatory attitudes toward people who are willing to stand for election can harm our community and democracy. As noted by the Supreme Court of Tasmania just over a week ago:

“[The Act] seeks to prevent and redress conduct which is seen as unjust, divisive and anathema to modern society. Accordingly, the Act has the higher purposes of the individual protection of all members of society and the overall maintenance and enhancement of social cohesion. The consequential benefits of the achievement of these purposes is the enhanced capacity of all members of the community to express views and participate in the political and social life of the community.” (Durstun v Anti-Discrimination Tribunal (No 2) [2018] TASSC 48 at [53]).

For more information contact:

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