



Engaging in anti-racism

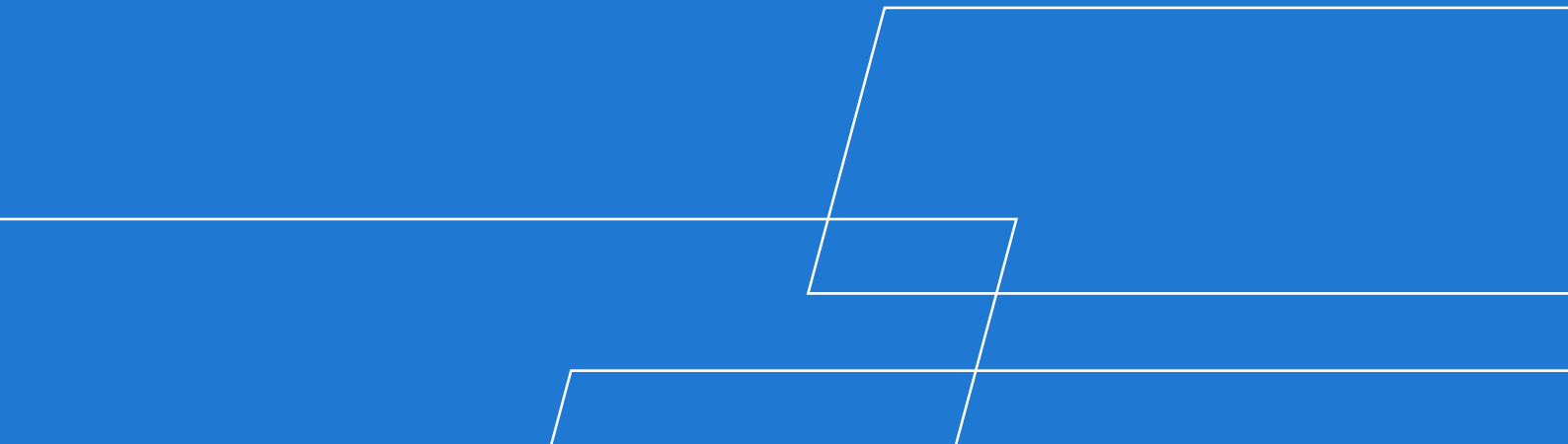
A guide for sport organisations

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Purpose



This resource is designed to support National Sporting Organisations, State Sporting Organisations and Peak Bodies in sport to better understand what anti-racism means in practice and how to implement meaningful, effective anti-racism strategies.

By engaging in this work, organisations can contribute to a more equitable, vibrant, and connected sporting future for all.

Racism remains a persistent and damaging issue within community sport, significantly affecting the health, wellbeing, and participation of Indigenous peoples and culturally and racially minoritised (CARM) communities. This systemic problem is evident across all levels of the sport ecosystem.

At the **grassroots level**, experiences and perceptions of racism deter individuals from engaging with or remaining in club-based sport.

As a result, clubs suffer the loss of potential players, volunteers, coaches, and future leaders, undermining the long-term sustainability and success of local sport communities.

At the **organisational level**, racism contributes to the ongoing underrepresentation of Indigenous and CARM individuals in paid roles, particularly in leadership, decision-making, and governance positions. This lack of representation not only limits diversity in thought and leadership but also reinforces structural barriers that hinder equitable access and opportunity.

This issue is particularly pressing as both Victoria and Australia continue to become more culturally and racially diverse.

In Victoria over 30% of the population was born overseas and over 27% speak a language other than English at home (ABS, 2021).

Yet, participation in organised sport tends to drop significantly after the age of 15, and adult participation in many sports is either plateauing or in decline.

These trends highlight the urgency of fostering safe and inclusive environments that reflect and welcome the communities they serve.

To build a thriving and inclusive community sport sector, it is essential to address the underrepresentation of Indigenous

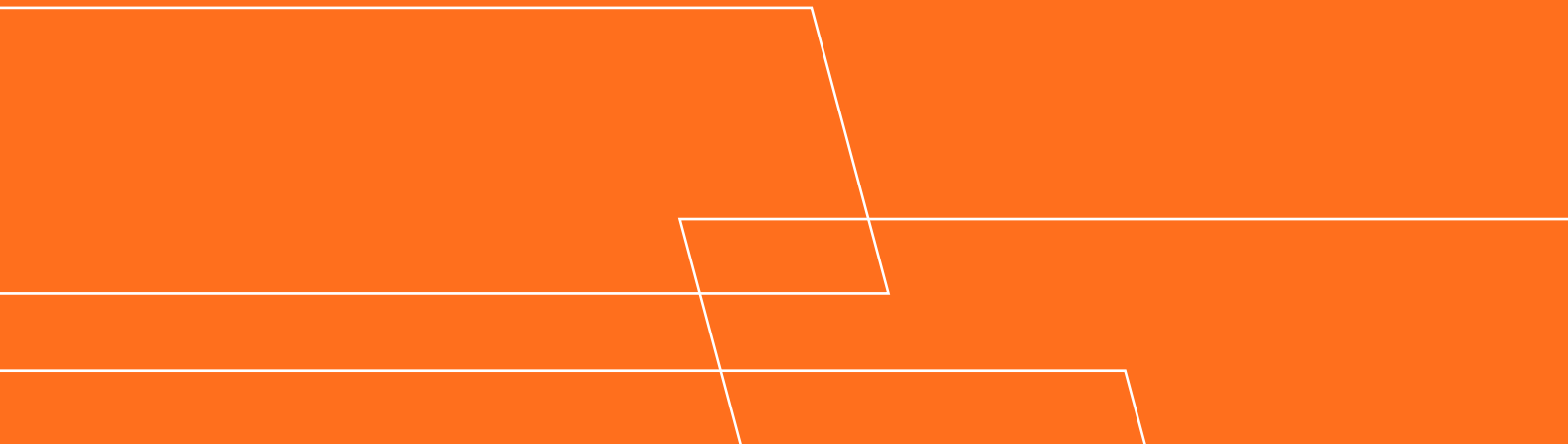
and CARM individuals and to actively dismantle the barriers they face.

Genuine commitment to anti-racism is critical. This involves proactive, sustained efforts to challenge discriminatory practices, policies, and attitudes within sporting organisations.





Key concepts



Race

The idea that humans can be organised into distinct biological 'races' with defined physical and social traits.

Today, it is widely accepted that biological categories of race do not exist. However, that does not mean that race, as a concept, is no longer relevant.

This is because ideas of race (and ideas that are racist) were foundational to the development of many of today's laws, cultures and societies, with certain racial identities perceived and positioned as superior to others (Australian Human Rights Commission).

Racism

Racism is the process by which systems, policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race.

Racism is more than just prejudice in thought or action. It occurs when this prejudice – whether individual or institutional – is accompanied by the power to discriminate against, oppress, or limit the rights of others ([Australian Human Rights Commission](#)).

Structural racism or institutional racism

Describes how laws, norms, policies, and practices create and maintain racial inequalities.

Viewing racism as structural highlights that it extends beyond individual attitudes or behaviours, which are shaped by their interaction with racist systems. These systems embed unequal power relations across institutions, placing negatively racialised groups at a systematic disadvantage (Lentin and Bergallie, 2024, p. 7).

An example of structural racism is assuming that a person will only have the skills or capacities for certain positions within a sport organisation based on their race and cultural background, as explained below:

I just get really frustrated that every time I apply for a role in a sporting organisation that is outside of the diversity, equity, inclusion space, they always say I don't have enough experience for it and that I should consider other equity and inclusion roles or specific Multicultural participation positions that they have because I'm Indian. I've done these roles for around 5 years already, and I want to progress into other opportunities, but I'm never considered to have the 'right' skill set for anything outside of Multicultural participation.

Interpersonal racism

Refers to racism expressed between individuals. It includes overt acts, everyday racism, and so-called microaggressions, which often have a significant impact, regardless of intent. Everyday racism, as defined by Essed (1991), highlights how racism is embedded in ordinary, routine interactions. It connects structural racism with daily racialised experiences, often going unnoticed because it feels so normal. These experiences can include subtle but harmful acts of disrespect, humiliations, rejections, blocked opportunities, and hostilities (Essed, 2008).

Examples of interpersonal racism in sport can be overt racial slurs that are derogatory and offensive, or more subtle actions that result in CARM people being treated or perceived differently, as the following example documents.

We play in a league where most of the teams consist of White players, whenever we turn up to play them as a mostly African team, we just get stared at a lot but more than that, there's an assumption that we will cause trouble. It feels like the other team and parents are watching us more closely because they think we will be a problem.

Racial microaggressions

A type of interpersonal racism, are everyday expressions of racism that reflect and reinforce broader systemic and structural hierarchies of power.

They are symptoms of deeply embedded social norms that privilege some groups while marginalising others.

Racial microaggressions, for example jokes, mispronunciation of names, and comments about food choices, often take covert, subtle, or indirect forms. These are typically expressed through comments, behaviours, or assumptions that may appear harmless but carry underlying messages of exclusion, inferiority, or devaluation.

An example of racial microaggressions in sport may be a coach repeatedly mispronouncing the name of CARM players. Microaggressions can sometimes be passed off as 'banter' or 'jokes' even though they cause harm, as the example below indicates.

It was done as a joke but one of the girls was messing about in the changing rooms and she put a towel over her head and was pretending it was a hijab. She didn't mean anything by it, she just didn't understand that she was being quite offensive.

Anti-racism

Is the active effort to identify and eliminate racism by challenging attitudes, behaviours, structures, and systems (Trener, Dunn and Paradies, 2024, p. 75).

It moves beyond individual or "neutral" positions, what Kendi (2019) critiques as being "not racist" toward confronting how institutions perpetuate racial inequality.

Genuine anti-racism requires ongoing accountability for both overt discrimination and the everyday reproduction of unequal power through organisational practices and culture.

Anti-racism differs from anti-discrimination or diversity-based frameworks in that it foregrounds power, centres Whiteness as a system of privilege, and recognises institutional complicity in sustaining racial hierarchies. It is inherently transformative, seeking not merely to manage racism but to dismantle the structural and ideological conditions that enable it (Kendi, 2019).

Racial literacy

Refers to “ideas and practices that lay bare racial injustices and encourage people to understand racial history and its impact on contemporary society, which are essential for working toward ameliorating injustices” (Chavez-Moreno, 2022, p. 481).

Racial literacy is the knowledge, skills, and critical awareness needed to recognise, understand, and address racism in its interpersonal, institutional, and systemic forms.

It involves both analysing how racism operates historically and structurally, and developing the practical capacity to challenge it in an ongoing way through language, action, and advocacy.

Culturally and racially minoritised communities (CARM)

Refers to groups of people who are marginalised or given minority status because of their race, ethnicity, culture, religion or language, often through social, political, and institutional power structures rather than population size.

The term is important because it highlights that being minoritised is a result of systemic processes, not an inherent trait of the group. It shifts attention from numbers to power and inequality, showing how exclusion and discrimination are maintained by racialised structures.

For a more detailed and comprehensive guide of key terminology, please read Alana Lentin and Debbie Bargallie's resource [Key Concept and Definitions for Building Racial Literacy](#).

There are numerous existing guides that provide frameworks for organisational level anti-racism work (see for example, [Australian Human Rights Commission](#), [Wellcome UK](#), [NHS](#), [MindTribes](#)).

The actions that are detailed in this guide are reflective of processes advocated for in these frameworks, principles we've identified in our literature reviews and the perspectives of our research participants (Jeanes et al., 2025 and Riaño-Rodríguez et al., 2025).

The Monash University website [provides detailed information on our research findings connected to this study](#).





Actions to support anti-racism within your sporting organisation



Recognise and acknowledge racism and demonstrate an organisational commitment to change

Acknowledge that racism exists at all levels of sport from grassroots to elite and commit publicly and consistently to anti-racism as an ongoing process, not a one-off initiative.

Actions

- Make a public statement acknowledging racism and committing to change.
- Include anti-racism as a standing agenda item in meetings and planning documents.
- Publish your anti-racism commitments publicly on webpages and social media and report progress annually.
- Integrate anti-racism goals across strategies, policies, and communications.

Example

In 2021 Basketball Australia conducted a [racial equality review](#) with the Australian Human Rights Commission and publicly made this document available as a commitment to change.

The English Football Association's [In Pursuit of Progress](#) reports yearly on anti-racism actions. The UK Sports Councils committed to the Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport (TRARIIS) in 2021 and publicly [share updates on progress](#).



Acknowledge the colonial histories of sport and promote truth telling

Recognise how colonisation has shaped the codes, cultures, and practices of sport.

Actions

- Provide education on your sport's colonial history to staff and leaders.
- Encourage open and reflective conversations about your sport's development through Australia's history and the influence this has on racism today especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to develop sustainable ways of working that promote reconciliation and healing.

Example

In Canada, Sask Sport, a not for profit organisations supporting sporting clubs in Canada engaged in developing an [Indigenous Sport Timeline](#) that serves as an educational tool highlighting key moments in Indigenous sport while fostering ongoing engagement in reconciliation.

The timeline was created through partnerships with Indigenous elders, communities and organisations



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Lead proactively and visibly

Leadership within sporting organisation can drive anti-racism through action, accountability, and culture.

Actions

- Set anti-racism goals for all leaders and include them in performance reviews.
- Provide racial literacy training for Board members and senior leaders.
- Model inclusive, anti-racist behaviours in all decision-making.
- Champion anti-racism initiatives and visibly support this work.



Dedicate resourcing to anti-racism

Anti-racism requires investment alongside organisational commitment.

Actions

- Allocate budget, staff time, and roles specifically for anti-racism work.
- Support training, partnerships, and evaluation through funded programs.
- Embed anti-racism responsibilities across departments, not just diversity roles.





Build racial literacy through education

Education empowers staff to recognise and address racism.

Actions

- Deliver regular anti-racism and cultural awareness training for all staff. Partner with organisations with capacity to build knowledge and provide education.
- Share accessible resources such as podcasts, online courses, and discussion guides with staff to build knowledge and encourage engagement.
- Integrate anti-racism education into coach, official, and volunteer training.

Further information

Organisations that can support anti-racism education within sport:

- [CMSport](#)
- [Reflect Forward](#)
- [Welcoming Clubs](#)

Examples of free resources that can be shared with staff:

- [Key Concept and Definitions for Building Racial Literacy](#)
- [Anti-Racism Awareness Online Course](#)
- [Learning to Be Anti-Racist: An Introductory Course](#)
- [Know better, do better – Antiracism podcast](#)
- [Dealing with the moment – Anti-Racism in Community Sport](#)



Collect and use data

Data provides a foundation for accountability and progress in anti-racism work and allows you to track progress and see change.

Actions

- Collect information on the cultural and racial diversity of staff, athletes, officials, and volunteers.
- Track representation across all levels, from entry roles to leadership.
- Use data to inform recruitment, promotion, and policy development.

Example

The US [TIDES Racial & Gender Report Cards](#) measure and publicly report diversity data across professional and collegiate sports.

In the United Kingdom, the [Race Representation Index](#) tracks progress towards racial equity at a national scale.

Both models create accountability and provide clear indicators for where change is needed.





Engage regularly with CARM and Indigenous staff

Listening to lived experience is key to meaningful change.

Actions

- Hold regular, culturally safe discussions with CARM and Indigenous staff.
- Ensure feedback leads to clear follow-up actions.
- Provide anonymous reporting options and protect staff from retaliation if issues are raised.
- If CARM and Indigenous staff leave the organisation, exit conversations should provide a safe space to honestly share reasons for leaving and offer suggestions for improvement.



Recognise and support colonial and cultural load

Acknowledge and resource the extra work CARM and Indigenous staff often carry in educating others and advocating for equity.

Actions

- Formally recognise colonial and cultural load in workloads and performance assessments.
- Provide additional time, mentoring, or remuneration for equity work.
- Avoid over-burdening a few individuals with responsibility for racial equity work.





Review recruitment practices

Ensure recruitment processes are fair, culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible.

Actions

- Review job descriptions and adverts for inclusive language.
- Include CARM and Indigenous representation in the development of job adverts and on interview panels.
- Consider affirmative action or targeted recruitment where under-representation exists.

Example

The NFL (US) [Rooney Rule](#) is an example of affirmative action recruitment policy that guarantees interviews for under-represented candidates in senior coaching positions.

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Embed anti-racism in policies and strategies

Policies make commitments real and guide daily practice.

Actions

- Develop or adopt an anti-racism policy outlining responsibilities for all staff.
- Integrate anti-racism objectives into strategic and operational plans.
- Create an anti-racism action plan with short- and long-term goals.
- Evaluate progress to anti-racism work and action plans with reportable data and to build an evidence base of what is effective in driving change.

Example

You can download the [Anti-Racism in Sport Accord policy template](#) for organisations.

You can also draw on broader framework to guide your action plan including the [Victorian Anti-racism Strategy](#) and the [National Anti-racism Framework](#) alongside relevant sport specific policies, for example the [Play Well Strategy](#).





Create safe systems to report and address racism

Reporting systems must protect people and address issues transparently.

Actions

- Establish clear, accessible processes for reporting racism at all levels.
- Train staff to recognise and respond to both overt and subtle forms of racism.
- Audit policies regularly to identify structural inequities and track responses.

Further information

England Football has developed a comprehensive [reporting system](#) supported by charitable organisation [Kick it Out](#). Clear support for victims is made available via the reporting process and indications of actions that will be taken.



Embed anti-racism within other equity focused work

Anti-racism should sit at the centre of all equity and inclusion work and focusing on other areas of equity (e.g. gender) does not mean that anti-racism work cannot be undertaken in tandem.

Actions

- Embed anti-racism principles in gender equity, disability inclusion, and LGBTIQ+ initiatives.
- Recognise intersectional barriers faced by CARM and Indigenous women and gender-diverse people.
- Ensure diversity and inclusion frameworks include specific anti-racism actions.

Example

The [Australian Sports Commission's Intersectionality Roadmap](#) provides a framework for ensuring anti-racism is centred in equity focused sport initiatives.



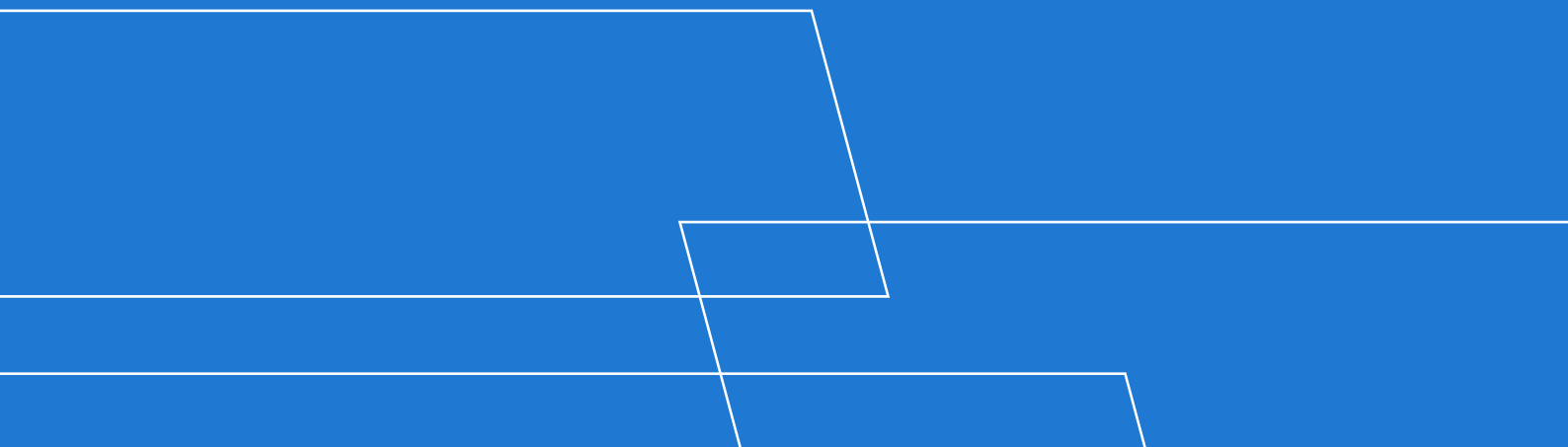
Commit to ongoing consultation and collaboration with diverse communities

Sustained dialogue builds trust, accountability, and stronger outcomes.

Actions

- Establish advisory groups or committees led by CARM and Indigenous representatives.
- Co-design strategies, programs, and evaluations with affected communities.
- Resource partnerships properly and ensure participation is respected and recognised.

Summary



Building an anti-racist sporting organisation is not a quick process, it requires sustained commitment, courageous leadership, and the allocation of time and resources.

Racism is deeply embedded in Australian society and its sporting systems, which means that creating genuine change will be an ongoing journey.

Progress will look different for each sporting organisation, but what matters is a clear commitment to act, to listen, and to keep moving forward.

The actions outlined in this guide provide guidance: sporting organisations do not need to take on everything at once, but you must begin, prioritise key areas, and embed anti-racism into your structures, policies, and everyday practices.

By doing so, sporting organisations can move beyond symbolic gestures and tokenism in addressing racism and move towards meaningful, systemic change that ensures that sport is a safe, inclusive, and empowering space for all.



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Appendices

Additional resources

Sport-specific

Australia

- [Dealing with the Moment – Anti-Racism in Community Sport](#)
A free online course developed by the Australian Sports Commission and Reflect Forward.
- [Guide to addressing spectator racism in sports](#)
Developed as part of 'Racism. It Stops With Me'.

Global

- [Kick It Out](#)
A not-for-profit organisation driving anti-racism work in the UK.
- [Show Racism the Red Card](#)
An anti-racism education charity in the UK.
- [Sport Information Resource Centre | Anti-Racism](#)
A resource hub of the House of Sport in Canada.
- [Play Fair: Anti-Racism in Sports Toolkit](#)
Developed by Inclusion in Canadian Sports Network. Explains what different kinds of racism are, and provides toolkits and possible actions taken to address racism.
- [Anti-racism in Coaching Toolbox](#)
A resource hub of Coaching Association of Canada
- [Sentry Sport](#)
A European project that developed a collection of resources for anti-discrimination policy and practice.

- [Tackling racism and discrimination in sport: Guide of Promising Practices, Initiatives and Activities](#)
A report by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Showcasing anti-racism practices in sport organisations.
- [FIFA good practice guide on diversity and anti-discrimination](#)
FIFA's anti-discrimination guide for national football associations as well as clubs.
- [Rules for Creating and sustaining an anti-racism sport and exercise organisation](#)
Journal article outlining key principle of anti-racism in sport
- [Sports for Good Free online courses](#)
A free online short courses developed in collaboration with Australian soccer legend and human rights activist Craig Foster to give you an understanding of how to facilitate and support the sporting industry's role in promoting global good

General

Australia

- [Racism. It Stops With Me](#)
A national campaign by the Australian Human Rights Commission offering tools and resources.
- [There's no place for racism in Victoria](#)
Resource by Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, intended to help organisations communicate with their stakeholders about rights and possible actions taken regarding racism in different languages.
- [How to become an anti-racist](#)
Tips for anti-racism provided by All Together Now. They also provide an anti-racism training module.
- [Creative Equity Toolkit](#)
An equity resource hub for art, cultural, and creative industries, managed by Diversity Arts Australia and the British Council

Global

- [Fighting racism and discrimination: a UNESCO toolkit](#)
UNESCO's anti-racism toolkit designed for governmental and non-governmental organisations.
- [Not just another toolkit \(for public authorities\)](#)
European Network Against Racism's (ENAR) toolkit to help public organisations to create transformative change
- [Anti-racism toolkit](#)
Toolkit for the healthcare sector. Provided by Health Innovation Network South London

Acknowledgements

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The suggested actions have been guided by the data collected as part of the project and literature reviews conducted examining anti-racism in sport and wider contexts.

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