

ADVISORY NOTE

THE PORTRAYAL OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

This Advisory Note is intended to help and encourage reporters and program producers to produce programs which treat all people with equal respect, regardless of their national, ethnic or linguistic background. It also suggests ways to avoid promoting or provoking prejudice, stereotyping or unwarranted generalisation. As such, it will also be of assistance to programmers, program promotion producers and program classifiers. This note should be read with the separate Advisory Note on the Portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

This Advisory Note acknowledges that licensees are subject to the *Racial Discrimination Act (Cth) 1975* and equivalent legislation in each State and Territory, and that the Australian Human Rights Commission and equivalent statutory bodies in each State and Territory are responsible respectively for administering those laws.

1. Be sensitive to language and images which people from non-English speaking or minority racial backgrounds may reasonably find offensive or discriminatory. In particular:
 - (a) avoid the unwarranted introduction of race or ethnicity into a story, and particularly the unnecessary use of ethnic-specific labels in reporting on suspected or convicted criminals;
 - (b) avoid references to the ethnic or racial origin of a person or group which imply that only people from English-speaking backgrounds are Australian (e.g. do not automatically refer to an Australian of Chinese background as “a Chinese man”);
 - (c) generally avoid outdated representations of how people from non-English speaking backgrounds speak English or behave.
2. When reporting or portraying events involving people with racial backgrounds which differ from your own, you should be conscious of your own preconceptions and be sensitive to the cultural norms and experiences of those people.
3. Any reports on race-related issues should be well researched, and not based solely on the claims of particular groups.
4. The religious and cultural beliefs and practices of people from non-English speaking or minority racial backgrounds should receive no less respect than those of the English-speaking majority. Editorial comment in these areas should be factually based, and culturally aware.
5. In scripting and casting drama and selecting on-air talent, management and producers should be concerned to reflect Australia’s complex and culturally diverse society.