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## Media release

### Government needs to respond to racist attacks in Tasmania

The Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCOT) today called on all levels of government to run anti-racist campaigns to dispel myths feeding racism.

Long term Tasmanian residents of Vietnamese descent were reportedly blamed for coronavirus and physically abused in the streets of Launceston on Monday:

[https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-20/coronavirus-fuelled-racial-attack-in-launceston-supermarket/12265594?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_content=sf234164671&utm\\_campaign=abc\\_hobart&utm\\_source=m.facebook.com&sf234164671=1](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-20/coronavirus-fuelled-racial-attack-in-launceston-supermarket/12265594?utm_medium=social&utm_content=sf234164671&utm_campaign=abc_hobart&utm_source=m.facebook.com&sf234164671=1)

“Tasmanians of Asian appearance are being abused because of coronavirus,” said Mr Waqas Durrani, Chair of the Multicultural Council of Tasmania.

“Unfortunately, coronavirus-based racism is set to grow as restrictions on our movements are wound back and we come in contact with each other more often.

“We need to dispel the myths feeding coronavirus-based racism.

“Tasmanians of Asian appearance are no more responsible for coronavirus than Tasmanians with an Anglo-Celtic background. Those individuals who unwittingly brought coronavirus to Tasmania include Tasmanians with an Anglo-Celtic background. It would be nonsense to blame all Tasmanians with an Anglo-Celtic background for coronavirus because of the travel of these individuals. Similarly, it is nonsensical to blame Tasmanians of Asian appearance.

“Tasmanians of Asian appearance are often long-term Australian residents and citizens, often have no recent travel, and often have no Chinese ancestry.

“Many Tasmanians with Chinese ancestry have no connection with mainland China — such as those whose families come from Malaysia, Taiwan, etc. Those with a connection to mainland China are not responsible for and may oppose much of what the Government of the People’s Republic of China does.

“Our local, state and federal governments can each run campaigns dispelling the myths feeding coronavirus-based racism.”

Last week the Multicultural Council of Tasmania wrote to the Prime Minister and the ambassador for the People’s Republic of China supporting the Australian Government’s call for an independent inquiry into the emergence of COVID-19.

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