



ANTI DISCRIMINATION  
COMMISSION QUEENSLAND

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## Brisbane bosses warned to beware of bias in employment

The findings of an Australian National University study showing that people with racially or ethnically sounding names need to submit significantly more job applications to achieve the same number of interviews as someone with an Anglo-Saxon sounding name is cause for alarm for Commissioner Susan Booth of the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland.

Commissioner Booth said that this type of bias could lead to legal action being taken by a complainant against a prospective employer if it could be shown that racial discrimination was behind an applicant's lack of success.

"This type of discrimination is prohibited under the *Anti-discrimination Act 1991* which protects people against race discrimination in the workplace in deciding who should be offered work or failing to offer work to an applicant based on their race."

The study found that having an Indigenous sounding name meant that Queensland applicants would have to field 41 per cent more applications to gain the same number of interviews.

"Indigenous employment in Queensland remains an issue with these results providing some evidence that what many of us have known anecdotally to be true; that race discrimination still occurs in this State." said Commissioner Booth.

A 1994 hearing in the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Tribunal awarded 17 weeks of lost wages, plus interest to an Aboriginal man who was denied employment due to his race.

An encouraging finding of the ANU study was that Brisbane employers are less inclined to discriminate against people who have non-Anglo-Saxon sounding names than their counterparts in Sydney, where having a Chinese sounding name could mean applicants would have to field up to 92 per cent more resumes, compared to 57 per cent in Brisbane.

"Although the study only looked at a limited number of industries, this type of research is very useful in highlighting the ongoing problems for non-Anglo-Saxon community members seeking employment in mainstream industries." Commissioner Booth said.

**Interview opportunities:** Commissioner Susan Booth of ADCQ is available for telephone interview

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