

Education campaign launches to Stop Public Threats of violence

Factsheet – May 2020



The Stop Public Threats campaign developed by Legal Aid NSW raises awareness that publicly threatening or inciting violence against a person or a group of people based on their race, religion or sexuality is a crime.

The education campaign reinforces that public threats of violence have no place in NSW and promotes the legal protections available to the NSW community.

The multimedia campaign launched in May includes a podcast, website, videos, social media materials, multilingual posters and workshops for community groups.

In 2018, the NSW Government introduced a criminal offence of publicly threatening or inciting violence based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or HIV/AIDS status.

Section 93Z of the *Crimes Act* provides for tough penalties and broader protections against public threats of violence, including on social and other forms of electronic media.

Multimedia campaign to Stop Public Threats

The Stop Public Threats campaign raises awareness that threats or incitement of violence against people because they belong to a particular group is a crime and it carries tough penalties.

The new website hosts a podcast, information about the laws, multi-lingual resources and links to support services. For more information visit: www.stoppublicthreats.legalaid.nsw.gov.au.

The campaign will be promoted via videos, social media, and posters. Legal Aid NSW will also be conducting training with community groups to help increase understanding of how the law works and how to report incidents of public threats.

Legal Aid NSW developed the campaign following extensive consultation with religious leaders, community organisations and government agencies.

Why a campaign to Stop Public Threats?

Legislative changes were made in NSW in 2018 following a campaign by the community – led by the 'Keep NSW Safe' coalition – for stronger protections under law.

The Stop Public Threats campaign raises awareness about the offence and supports members of the community to report incidents.

NSW has new laws against public threats and incitement to violence based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex or HIV/AIDS status.

You can report incidents to your local support service or to the police.

**PUBLIC THREATS
AGAINST SOME OF US**
A PROBLEM FOR ALL OF US



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Stop Public Threats during COVID-19

There have been alarming reports that the COVID-19 pandemic has fuelled racist abuse towards some members of the community.

The Stop Public Threats campaign is timely to support a cohesive response to COVID-19 in NSW and to safeguard vulnerable members of the community to understand their legal rights.

What legislative changes were made in 2018?

An offence was introduced under section 93Z of the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) to strengthen legal protections against threats or incitement of violence towards individuals or groups of persons on the basis of their race, religious belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or HIV or AIDS status.

Section 93Z replaces four separate vilification offences which were repealed from the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*. Those offences, which carried a maximum penalty of six months imprisonment, had no prosecutions in 30 years.

An offence under section 93Z carries a term of up to three years in prison and an \$11,000 fine.

What is an offence under section 93Z?

Under section 93Z of the *Crimes Act*, a person is guilty of an offence if they intentionally or recklessly, by a public act, threaten or incite violence against another person because of their:

- race
- religion
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- intersex status
- HIV/AIDS status.

A public act may include: speaking, writing, displaying notices, playing recorded material, broadcasting, social media and other electronic communications, and any other acts that the public can see such as gestures, signs and flags.

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Making public threats or inciting people to be violent towards others because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex or HIV/AIDS status is illegal. If you feel threatened or witness this behaviour – report today!



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For more information

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