

Study unearths Australian racist views

Herald Sun
September 29, 2008 12:00am

FOUR in 10 Australians believe some ethnic groups don't belong here, a study has shown.

And one in 10 have outwardly racist views, a study shows.

NSW appears to be the most racist state, but the project's lead researcher, Kevin Dunn, attributed this to Sydney being the focus of immigration.

The study, led by the human geography and urban studies professor and his team from the University of Western Sydney, shows that racism remains high despite having waned over the years.

He will unveil state-by-state statistics on Friday, at the Rights, Reconciliation, Respect and Responsibility international conference at Sydney's University of Technology.

Challenging Racism: The Anti-Racism Research Project randomly surveyed about 12,500 people in different studies during the past eight years.

"It's an indicator of a narrow view of what constitutes Australianism," Prof Dunn said.

People were asked which cultural or ethnic groups did not fit into Australian society.

In NSW, 46 per cent of respondents said some ethnic groups should not be in the country. In the ACT, 28 per cent gave such a response - the lowest figure.

Among those over 65, 65 per cent gave such a response, compared with 31 per cent among those aged 18 to 34.

"It's too high, isn't it?" Prof Dunn said. "We've got to bring that down."

Respondents also singled out specific groups they thought didn't belong.

"The most often-mentioned groups were Muslims, or people from the Middle East," Prof Dunn said.

On average, about one in 10 people said it was not good for people of different cultures to marry, and about the same number said that not all races were equal.

"It's only about one in 10 people now in Australia across the different states that would have that sort of view -- the racial supremacists, for instance," Prof Dunn said.

"That's still quite high, I suppose. There's a lot of concern that comes out of that."

He said NSW ranked highest in most categories but attributed that to Sydney being the focus for immigration.

"There's just more cultural diversity here - there's more opportunity for cross-cultural contact, and that means some of them will not be positive ones," he said.

Prof Dunn and his team will release regional results within each state some time early next year.

They will also recommend strategies to lower racist views, the prevalence of which Prof Dunn said remained low by international standards.

- AAP