



20 21

ANNUAL REPORT

It's Not A Compliment



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

It's Not A Compliment (INAC) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work: the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation.

We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples' connections to land, sea, and community, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

OUR MISSION

Achieving Street Justice For All

OUR VISION

A society where street harassment is recognised as a form of harm in and of itself—not simply as a precursor to other forms of violence—where all individuals know what street harassment looks like, how to call it out and how to safely intervene to stop or prevent it.

OUR VALUES

INTER



SECTIONAL

INTERSECTIONAL

COMMUNITY
LED



COMMUNITY-LED



TRANSFORMATIONAL



**ACCOUNTABLE AND
COMMITTED TO LEARNING**



COLLABORATIVE

OUR HISTORY

It's Not A Compliment (INAC) grew out of a simple idea – making the everyday better for vulnerable communities.

What started as a brainstorming session in September 2019 for a fellowship task soon turned into something more personal when INAC's co-founders, Aakanksha Manjunathaswamy and Annelise Lecordier, realised how common street harassment was for many in their circles. Regardless of their gender, sexuality or racial identity – anyone that could in some way be coded as 'other' had a story to share about a time a stranger had made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe in a public space.

What originally felt like a small, easily dismissable personal experience suddenly turned into something bigger – a flood of stories that could attest to a culture that was unfairly designating who had a right to exist freely in our streets. And they were determined to share them.

Since then, INAC has grown into a full-fledged organisation powered by a team of passionate volunteers united in their belief that no one should have to feel unsafe or less than for simply existing in public.

As a grassroots organisation fighting for the rights of all individuals to enjoy public spaces free of the fear of harassment, we run projects, workshops and campaigns that break through the normalisation of street harassment and encourage communities to challenge the age-old norms that make this type of harm possible in the first place.

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01

CEO'S
MESSAGE

As we still navigate through uncertain times, It's Not A Compliment (INAC) has continued to learn, adapt and flourish.

Throughout the pandemic, street harassment has persisted in a variety of forms, as seen from the stories shared. This has further highlighted the importance of our work.

While the pandemic limited our ability to create change directly on the streets, we leveraged our digital engagement tools to continue our anti-street harassment work.

I am immensely proud and thankful of the way the team stepped up to the challenge and continued to fiercely advocate for safer public spaces.

Our focus for 2022 is to increase community education around street harassment, build strong partnerships with our allies, and expand the scope of our work.

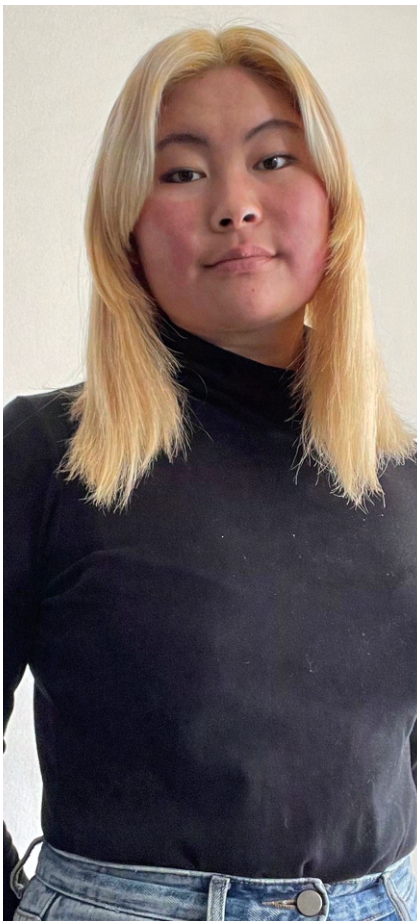
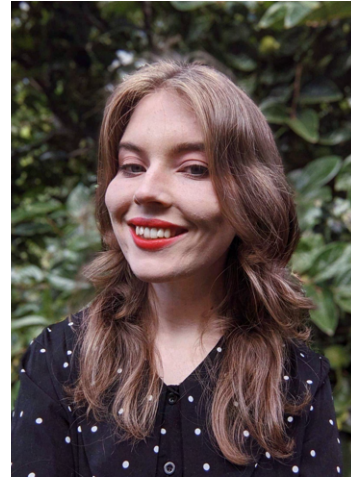
-Aakanksha Manjunathaswamy



02 OUR TEAM

Volunteers are the life force behind everything we do at It's Not A Compliment – our work would not be possible without them. We value their passion, determination and the unique skills and experiences they bring to our fight for safer and more inclusive public spaces.





03 OUR BOARD

We are delighted to introduce our new Board of Directors: Aakanksha Manjunathaswamy, Kathryn Bellion, Laura Conti, Lisa Seary, Priya Serrao and Steffi Chang. Our directors are all united in their mission to create safer streets for all through It's Not A Compliment, and join the organisation with a range of expertise, backgrounds, and experiences.

As an organisation that centres intersectionality in everything we do, we couldn't be prouder to have a board that reflects and shares our commitment to inclusivity and street justice for all.



Aakanksha Manjunathaswamy



Kathryn Bellion



Laura Conti



Lisa Seary



Priya Serrao



Steffi Chang

04 OUR WORK

At It's Not A Compliment, our work focuses on breaking through the normalisation of street harassment as an everyday annoyance and igniting cultural, legal, and institutional changes to stamp out this issue. Our work encompasses research, campaigns and, policy and advocacy.

Rather than focusing on criminalising street harassment or focusing on individual acts of perpetrators, we prioritise using an awareness based approach in all aspects of our work to create broader cultural change that positions street harassment as more than an isolated problem but one that manifests from misogyny, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of societal discrimination.

Our awareness approach involves:

- sharing and publishing anonymous stories of people's experiences of street harassment
- collaborating with other Non-government organisations (NGOs) to further empower people to come together to access the myriad of resources about street harassment and its intersections, to feel safe on the street and support those experiencing street harassment. Our work with local and international NGOs also ensures we remain open to continually learning and accurately representing the diverse groups and communities affected by street harassment.
- expanding people's understanding of street harassment through targeted series that highlight the intersections of street harassment including gender, race, disability etc. Our targeted series, whether delving into everyday experiences of harassment, exploring the concept of active bystanders or highlighting the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community, seeks to expand people's understanding of street harassment and create conversations on topics like consent, body positivity and gendered violence.

RESEARCH

In April 2021 we launched A SNAPSHOT OF STREET HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES IN VICTORIA. In an independent research survey conducted in 2020, INAC reached 343 respondents in three months.

- **The results demonstrate INAC's ability to reach diverse and underrepresented populations including immigrants (13.1%), people with visible disabilities or mobility issues (4.7%), and people of diverse genders (12%) or sexual orientations (57.4%).**

Responses demonstrated the value of INAC's bystander intervention workshops.

- Only 15.5% of respondents had a bystander intervene during an incident of street harassment.
- 100% of respondents who had experienced bystander intervention indicated trained community and/or bystander intervention would be their desired outcome during a future incident of harassment, indicating the efficacy of trained bystander intervention.
- The significance of trained bystander intervention was demonstrated by one respondent's comment: "Most people in the moment are trying to be helpful, but without the skills/experience in [de-escalating] situations, intervention can cause more problems." This comment illustrates the importance of providing the community with best-practice advice, as INAC does.

**A SNAPSHOT
OF STREET
HARASSMENT
EXPERIENCES
IN VICTORIA**

- The benefit of bystander intervention to those who experience street harassment was evidenced by respondents who stated they have felt validated, recognised and safer in instances when someone has intervened or acknowledged the incident. Additionally, respondents indicated they would feel supported, secured and grateful and even more courageous to counter the harassment themselves, demonstrating the value to wellbeing.

The five most common desired resolutions to an experience of street harassment were:

SOMEONE TO
INTERVENE OR HELP
IF THEY
WITNESS IT

89.8%

NON-POLICE
INTERVENTION BY
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

68.8%

ENVIRONMENTAL
CHANGES, LIKE MORE
STREET LAMPS OR
LARGER FOOTPATHS

57.4%

A WAY TO EASILY
REPORT IT TO THE
GOVERNMENT FOR
DATA COLLECTION

53.0%

A WAY TO PROCESS
OR EXPRESS THE
EFFECTS OF STREET
HARASSMENT, LIKE
INTERACTIVE PUBLIC
ART OR A SPEAK-OUT

46.4%

CAMPAIGNS AND ADVOCACY

In 2021 we launched three public awareness campaigns focusing on the intersectional nature of street harassment:

- #NoSpaceForHarassment
- #MakeAustraliaSafer
- Our Public Spaces



Our #NoSpaceForHarassment campaign was a multi-fold project highlighting the prevalence of street harassment in Australia, with a focus on the intersectional nature of street harassment.

The campaign coincided with International Anti-Street Harassment Week (April 2021) and saw the organisation share stories of street harassment through campaign postcards which were placed in cafes, retailers, and public spaces across the City of Melbourne spanning the CBD to Melbourne's northern and western suburbs. These postcards were also supported by a number of social media video and audio content.

By sharing stories of harassment, our #NoSpaceForHarassment campaign aimed to redefine how we all view public spaces and recognise that for many, public spaces are far from neutral and safe spaces.



Racism has always been a social and moral issue, and is a recurring and prevalent component of Australia's society. This can be traced back to the discriminatory attitudes and practices towards Indigenous communities. The COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge in racism and xenophobia towards the Asian community both in Australia and around the world.

Our #MAKEAUSTRALIASAFER Campaign (27 September-9 October) aimed to shine a spotlight on how racism and racialised street harassment affects margined communities, and what we can all do to make Australia a more inclusive and safer society.

As part of the campaign, we published four Toolkits:

- '4 Ways to Call Out Racism': a toolkit with applicable strategies on how to call out racism and go beyond being a performative ally or passive bystander.
- 'Call Out' and 'Call In': these two toolkits offered four practical strategies on how to call out, and call in, racism.
- 'Call In vs Call Out': which focused on the difference between calling in and calling out racism.
- 'Microaggressions': which focused on what microaggressions are, the fact they have always been prevalent in the lived experiences of minority groups such as POC and Bla(c)k people in Australia, and it's immense impact on those affected.



Street harassment is not only a gendered issue; it is also faced by many intersecting marginalised groups including, but not limited to, people with disabilities, sex workers, LGBTQIA+ folks, people experiencing homelessness, People of Colour and First Nations peoples etc. As a result, the fight for street justice and the solutions to the issue must be intersectional and inclusive.

The Our Public Spaces campaign (21-27 October) aimed to foster productive and educational conversations about the intersectional nature of street harassment through centering the experiences of marginalised people on our social media channels.

The Campaign originated from INAC's 2021 research report which revealed how street harassment is a prevalent issue affecting many people, especially those from marginalised communities.

As part of the campaign, we:

- invited our community and members of the public to use the hashtag, #OurPublicSpaces, to share their stories and experiences of street harassment, and other information relating to street harassment

- supported our community's online storytelling through poster installations around the City of Melbourne. The posters contained QR codes with more information about the campaign and how to get involved.
- published a toolkit/educational resource titled '10 Ways You Can Help Tackle Street Harassment' which equips readers with tools to join the fight for street justice
- facilitated an Open Mic Night on 24 October: an evening of performances, solidarity and community where a number of artists from different mediums performed pieces about lived experiences of harassment.

05

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

**52
STORIES**

**PUBLISHED IN 2021
AND 205 SINCE OUR
INCEPTION IN
NOVEMBER 2019***

350,0000 +

**PEOPLE REACHED
THROUGH OUR
DIGITAL PLATFORMS**

70+

**COUNTRIES
REACHED THROUGH
OUR WORK**

6,600+

**PEOPLE ACTIVELY
FOLLOWING OUR
WORK THROUGH
OUR 4 DIGITAL
PLATFORMS**

***Not counting the countless stories shared in the comments of our digital engagement platforms and inbox**

343

**PEOPLE WHO TOOK PART IN OUR
FIRST OF MANY SURVEYS ALSO
HIGHLIGHTING DEMONSTRATE
INAC'S ABILITY TO REACH
DIVERSE AND
UNDERREPRESENTED
POPULATIONS**

500+

**PEOPLE REACHED
ON THE STREETS
THROUGH OUR
CAMPAIGNS**

06 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

We are regulated by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). We are registered as a public company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).

07 HOW FUNDS WERE USED

In 2021, funds were used for the following:

- running campaigns
- supporting our research
- staff training and support
- technology and
- administration costs

One of our key goals for 2022 will involve launching our multifaceted fundraising strategy to help expand the scope of our work.

08 **THANK YOU**

2021 has been a challenging year due to the pandemic. However, thanks to the support of our community of individuals, organisations and businesses, our organisation has not missed a beat; it has continued to grow and thrive as we work to achieve street justice for all.

Beyond being a challenging year, 2021 was one of remarkable milestones and growth as INAC marked its second year in October.

We are beyond grateful, and feel privileged to work, and be supported by our strong community. If you shared a story with us, participated in our campaigns and research surveys, had a conversation within your community about street harassment or engaged with our work on social media, thank you.

09

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As a grassroots organisation and Australia's only organisation solely focusing on tackling street harassment with an intersectional lens, we welcome support and collaborations from individuals, organisations or businesses who support our mission and vision.

Become a member

Being a member means you can join committees, attend any general meetings, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and more!

Volunteer your time

By volunteering with us, you'll become part of a community of talented advocates committed to working, learning and growing together to achieve street justice for all.

Make a donation

As a grassroots organisation, every donation we receive goes a long way in helping us create safer public spaces for all. A clear indicator of that is the change we have been able to bring about in such a short amount of time while being completely volunteer driven.

Support/ Collaborate on a project or campaign

Are you an organisation that is stakeholder in public safety, social cohesion, social and community development or social justice looking to work together on a project or support one of our projects, drop us a line.

Support an event or fundraising activity

Looking to support one of our events or fundraiser for us?
Get in touch to explore possibilities

Become a corporate partner

We always go further when we go together. If you are a business that is actively working towards a more just and equitable world, reach out as we'd love to hear from you.

To learn more about any of the above reach out to us at
itsnotacomplimentmelbourne@gmail.com

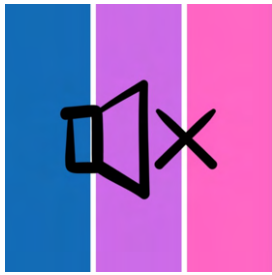
10 **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

As we continue to grow, so has our ability and capacity to bring about change.

In line with the above, 2022 and beyond will focus on:

- Community education, development and capacity building: for us, achieving street justice for all can only happen if we change community attitudes and norms surrounding street harassment and promote a model of collective responsibility for public safety.
- Capacity building: to ensure that we continue to build a strong and sustainable movement internally and externally.
- Research and policy:
 - Research: one of our goals is to fill existing gaps in research surrounding street harassment to showcase the true extent of the issue across Victoria. To achieve this, we have two more research projects launching in 2022 and a few more in development.
 - Policy: we will continue to further streamline our policy goal which focuses on community centred solutions to street harassment over criminalisation and involves the passing of essential legislation that will recognise street harassment as a form of harm and the provision of funding for us to bring community solutions around the issue to life.

We will be publishing our five year strategic plan in the new year.



It's Not A Compliment

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@its not a compliment

I can be changed by what
happens to me.
But I refuse to be reduced by it.

– Maya Angelou