

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PERSON OF COLOUR

People of Colour encompasses all non-Anglo ethnic groups and emphasises the common experiences of systemic racism¹. The term isn't used to separate and segregate individuals, but rather to acknowledge the systemic barriers that people of colour face in society. Being a person of colour is not about the shade of someone's skin – it's about a person's lived experience of interpersonal, institutional and structured racism, social exclusion and inequality. Whether someone identifies with this term or not, what matters most is that people of colour have the right to self-determination: this means, if you say you are, you are, and if we say we are, we are – it's not, and never has been, for anyone else to decide.

Since Australia was first colonised by the British, power was violently taken from First Nations people and the dominant culture started becoming Anglo or English. Australia is still predominantly Anglo, and if you're Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or if your family migrated here from another country, it can make it hard to grow up here. You can feel like an outsider, even if this is where you were born. You may want to keep the language you speak at home secret or you may make sure you only bring 'normal' sandwiches to school, even though the Mimos or the Banh Mi you eat at home is better. You might even wish you could just fit in and be like everyone else. It can sometimes take a while to find pride in your family, religion or the culture you're a part of – but this is part of what makes you special. Being a person of colour is a strength not a weakness, and at RVOC we're proud to identify as People of Colour. While our Board is composed entirely of individuals who self-identify as people of colour, you don't have to identify as a person of colour to be a part of our community – our work has and always will be about centring the aspirations of newly arrived communities in regional Victoria.

1. Askari, Javahir (October 10, 2019). "The Political Correctness of 'People of Colour'". Political Animal Magazine



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