

Employment and pre-employment race-related complaints

The five race-related grounds (race, racial harassment, racial disharmony, colour, and ethnic and national origins) are commonly combined in Commission reporting. The combined overall proportion of race-related employment complaints in the five year period 2006-10 was 28.1%.

The most commonly cited themes of race-related complaints are shown in Table 30.

Table 30 / Race and employment complaints

	NUMBER OF RACE-RELATED COMPLAINTS	PROPORTION OF RACE-RELATED COMPLAINTS
Discrimination	168	23%
Racist abuse/comments	162	22%
Language in the workplace	93	13%
Harassment	89	12%
Declined role	40	5%
Ethnic targeting of roles	40	5%

'Discrimination' is something of a catch all category and is when the complainant either used the word 'discrimination', or described a situation where a person was being treated differently allegedly due to race-related reasons, and when the complaint did not fit into another common theme category. Similarly 'harassment' complaints are when the complainant used the word 'harassment' to describe the complaint, and when it did not fit in any of the other common themes.

Complaints of racist comments or abuse were the most common single issue (other than the broad 'discrimination'), accounting for 22% of race-related complaints.

'Language' complaints are of two main types: issues around languages other than English being spoken in the workplace, and English

language ability or accent: 49 complaints were about languages other than English being spoken in workplaces, including 8 relating to prohibitions on the use of te reo Māori at work and 3 other Māori language issues.

29 complaints were about people having trouble gaining work, or problems with colleagues because of their accent or lack of English language skills.

15 complaints were about job advertisements which specified a first language command of English (11 complaints) or the ability to speak another specified language (4 complaints).

Numbers of each type of complaint have fluctuated in the last five years, and there is no evidence of an increase in any of the specific themes in the last two years.

