

## Dr Tim Soutphommasane

*Australian Human Rights Commission*  
Race Discrimination Commissioner



Dr Tim Soutphommasane is Race Discrimination Commissioner and commenced his five-year appointment on 20 August 2013. Prior to joining the Australian Human Rights Commission, he was a political philosopher and held posts at The University of Sydney and Monash University. His thinking on multiculturalism, national identity and patriotism has been influential in shaping debates in Australia and Britain.

Dr Soutphommasane is the author of four books, *I'm Not Racist But ...* (2015), *The Virtuous Citizen* (2012), *Don't Go Back To Where You Came From* (2012), and *Reclaiming Patriotism* (2009). He was co-editor (with Nick Dyrenfurth) of *All That's Left* (2010).

### Combating Racism and Promoting Social Cohesion

Australia has been a successful multicultural society, but the challenge of combating racism remains. This paper reflects on emerging challenges in maintaining social cohesion and community harmony. Among other things, organised racist extremism, having been in retreat for some time, appears to be revitalised. As we mark 40 years of the Racial Discrimination Act, it is timely to reflect on our society's response to prejudice and discrimination. It remains vital that legislation play a role in setting standards for conduct. But this must be accompanied by educational responses in civil society – as well as by constitutional statements about racial discrimination. This paper also examines the ongoing relevance of Australia's 'multicultural citizenship' model of integration, amid public debates about citizenship and national security.

