

# Research

News

Australian Market & Social Research Society | Volume 32 | Number 4 | May 2015



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AMSRS  YEARS  
PROMOTING, ENHANCING AND PROTECTING THE RESEARCH PROFESSION SINCE 1955

**CULTURE AND DIVERSITY**

# Researchers do not discriminate – they are selective

**Researchers must be careful to ensure that their research is not perceived as discriminatory.**

This perception could arise because a project may require the selection of certain people – and therefore the ‘rejection’ of others.

A researcher may want to talk to people of a certain gender, age, marital status or with certain purchasing preferences, personal habits or behaviours.

People who are contacted, but do not meet the selection criteria are advised that they are not required.

This ‘rejection’ may give rise to a perception amongst these people that they are being discriminated against because of their age, gender or other attribute.

Anti-discrimination legislation is in place in every state and territory in Australia.

There are no specific exceptions for commercial market or social research.

Researchers need to be mindful of their obligations when undertaking their sampling or recruiting to avoid claims being made against them on grounds of unlawful discrimination.

More details and guidelines to help researchers minimise this risk are detailed in the AMSRS Fact Sheet on Market and Social Research and Anti-discrimination Law.

**In summary:**

- Wherever possible, design the research project to be as inclusive as possible. Do not exclude people needlessly.
- Consistent with good research practice, ensure that the selection criteria used during the screening process are not readily apparent to potential participants,

so they are not aware of any specific reason for exclusion.

- Ensure that anyone administering the questionnaire understands the reasons for selection of certain people and knows how to respond to questions about the screening criteria.
- Use diplomacy. If someone wishes to be involved, allow them to express their views or participate, even though that data may not be used in the survey.

Always follow the guidelines and ensure that everyone involved in the research process, including the client, understands the need to consider these issues.

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 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS  
 OFFICER**

