

Toronto condo developer launches campaign to tackle racism in construction industry

Campaign by Tridel comes after several nooses found on Toronto construction sites

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Andrea DelZotto, director and executive vice-president of community development at the Tridel Group of Companies, says: 'Everyone has a right to work in an environment that is safe, that is physically, psychologically and culturally safe as well.' (CBC)

A Toronto condo developer has launched a "Built for Respect" campaign to tackle racism in the construction industry, with the support of a labour union, a construction company, industry associations, the city and province.

The campaign by Tridel comes after several nooses were found at Toronto construction sites, including Michael Garron Hospital in East York, earlier this year.

Mayor John Tory announced his support for the campaign at a news conference on Wednesday. It was held at a construction site of The Well, a mixed-use development, at Front Street West and Spadina Avenue.

"We've seen some of these horrific incidents involving nooses left on construction sites and we've heard other evidence of racism taking place within construction sites and in the industry itself," Tory told reporters.

Tory said the launch is an important event because it helps to build awareness that anti-Black racism exists in Toronto.

"These kinds of acts of racism, these kinds of acts of discrimination, are just not how we live here and they are just not who we are," Tory said. "Racism and discrimination have no place in this city. They have no place in this province. They have no place in this country."

- [Health-care workers rally against racism after nooses found at hospital construction site](#)
- [Racist message found at Michael Garron Hospital construction site](#)

In a news release, Tridel said it developed the campaign with its construction division Deltera. The campaign will focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. A steering committee, made up of employees at all levels and across all teams of the organization, will provide direction.

Tridel organized the campaign in partnership with EllisDon, Local 183 of the Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) and Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD).

Campaign to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion

Andrea DelZotto, director and executive vice-president of community development at the Tridel Group of Companies, told reporters that the campaign shows the company's commitment to fighting racism.

"At Tridel and Deltera, we always say the first community we build is our own," DelZotto said.

DelZotto said Tridel has a responsibility to continue to build a culture "built on integrity, respect and professionalism" and that culture embraces diversity.

"Everyone has a right to work in an environment that is safe, that is physically, psychologically and culturally safe as well," she said.

DelZotto said, in effect, Tridel is building a "World House," not just condos, houses, shops and apartments.

"We started a very important conversation in our industry. Our Built for Respect initiative is the foundation of our efforts to educate and build awareness around diversity, equity and inclusion," she said in the release.



A construction worker overlooks the future site of Michael Garron Hospital's Ken and Marilyn Thomson Patient Care Centre near Coxwell and Sammon Avenues. A number of nooses have been found at the site this year. (Martin Trainor/ CBC News)

Systemic racism exists in construction industry, Tridel says

Earlier this year, RESCON launched what it calls a Construction Against Racism Everywhere, or CARE, campaign to raise awareness that racism is not acceptable in the construction industry, according to Richard Lyall, RESCON president.

- [Tory discusses anti-Black racism with unions after 5 nooses found on construction sites this summer](#)
- [Carpenters' Union removes member after noose found at Eglinton Crosstown](#)

In a [recent news report](#) published in the *Toronto Sun*, Lyall said RESCON gave hard hat stickers with the CARE logo to employers. He said workers have been asked to put the stickers on their hard hats to show their support. RESCON also organized a roundtable on racism and it includes representatives of companies, workers, educators, contractors and the city and province.

According to a Tridel spokesperson, RESCON "started the conversation" and the Built for Respect campaign follows those efforts.



Toronto Mayor John Tory says: 'Racism and discrimination have no place in this city. They have no place in this province. They have no place in this country. That is not who we are.' (CBC)

In the release, Tridel said the campaign will provide clarity on what is expected and what will not be tolerated in its workplaces to ensure they remain equitable and inclusive.

By providing appropriate training and education in support of anti-racism, Tridel said it hopes to raise awareness that racist acts are not typically committed in isolation and systemic racism exists in the construction industry.