



Australian Human
Rights Commission

2026 2030

STRATEGIC PLAN



Introduction

Human rights are standards that governments around the world have agreed to meet so that everyone can live a safe, free and dignified life. Human rights belong to all of us, no matter who we are or where we live. Human rights are about being treated fairly, treating others fairly and being able to choose how we live our lives. When human rights are respected, our lives are better and our communities are stronger, healthier, safer and more prosperous.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has been protecting and promoting the human rights of people in Australia since 1986. This Strategic Plan outlines how we will undertake our functions over the next 5 years to 2030.

The Plan responds to a complex and challenging environment. There are significant threats to people's rights in Australia including through rising racism, increased polarisation and division, rapid technological change, climate change, persistent inequality and continued disadvantage in rural areas compared to the cities. Globally, the consensus on human rights is being eroded and United Nations institutions are facing major challenges.

The Plan has a strong focus on human rights education to improve understanding and acceptance of human rights and to address declining civics knowledge. It has a continued focus on systemic legislative reforms including an Australian Human Rights Act, to better protect people's rights. It features a more integrated 'One Commission' approach to our work, recognising that many human rights issues intersect and that our work is stronger through improved collaboration internally and externally.

As the Commission marks our 40 years anniversary, this Plan sets out our agenda for how we will use the powers and resources granted to us to maximise our positive impact to improve the human rights of all people in Australia.

Acknowledgement of First Peoples' country and sovereignty

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived on the lands now called Australia for thousands of generations. They are the First Peoples. They established hundreds of sovereign nations and lived sustainably on their traditional country with sophisticated culture, law, language and knowledge.

Colonisation devastated First Peoples. Colonisers took First Peoples' land, brought disease, suppressed language and culture and forced First Peoples off their country and onto missions and reserves. They committed genocidal acts; massacres, systematic child removal and more.

First Peoples resisted and survived. While the injustice of colonisation is ongoing, their ancient cultures and deep connection to country continue to endure. Their sovereignty has never been ceded. As the Uluru Statement from the Heart recognises, it co-exists alongside Australian sovereignty.

We must work with First Peoples to create a different story for future generations. One where truth is acknowledged and understood, where First Peoples have power and control over the issues that affect them and where there is genuine equality. By addressing injustice, we can come together as a nation with a brighter, shared future.

About the Australian Human Rights Commission

The Commission is an independent statutory organisation established by the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth). The Commission exercises functions under this legislation and the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and the *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth). The Commission also has specific responsibilities under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

The Commission is Australia's National Human Rights Institution. National

Human Rights Institutions are established by nations as independent bodies with a constitutional or legislative mandate to protect and promote human rights. There are over 110 National Human Rights Institutions globally, with [minimum standards that they must meet](#) to be considered credible and effective.



**Australian
Human Rights
Commission**

We have 4 core functions under our legislation:



Access to justice

We help people to resolve complaints of discrimination and human rights breaches through our complaint handling services.



Fairer laws, policies and practices

We review existing and proposed laws, policies and practices and provide expert advice on how they can better protect people's human rights. We help organisations to protect human rights in their work. We publish reports on human rights problems and how to fix them.



Education and understanding

We promote understanding, acceptance and public discussion of human rights. We deliver workplace and community human rights education and training.



Compliance

We are the regulator for positive duty laws requiring employers and others to address sexual harassment, sex discrimination and other unlawful conduct.

Our promise

We promise to use the Commission's powers and resources to help build an Australia where everyone is safe, free, equal and able to contribute to and share in our national prosperity.

We will work for just outcomes for people when their rights are breached.

We will treat everyone with dignity and respect, listening to different voices and especially those of people whose rights are denied. We will perform our functions impartially, fairly, accessibly and efficiently.

Our vision

Our vision for Australia is one where everyone can live free and equal in dignity and rights as part of a strong, healthy democratic society.

Our purpose

We protect and promote the human rights of all people and communities in Australia as the nation's independent National Human Rights Institution.

Our values and guiding principles

As a Commonwealth public entity, we uphold the [Australian Public Service Values](#):

- impartial
- committed to service
- accountable
- respectful
- ethical
- stewardship.

In addition, **5 Guiding Principles** inform our human rights work.

First Peoples Focus

We will consider the impact for First Peoples in everything we do, consider First Peoples' perspectives and work in partnership with them.

Independence

We operate independently in line with the [Paris Principles](#).

Collaboration

We collaborate and promote participation in our work from conception to completion.

Impact

We focus on achieving positive change by measuring and evaluating our impact.

Intersectionality

We address intersecting forms of discrimination

Goals

Justice for First Peoples

First Peoples' human rights are realised with a priority focus on rights to self-determination and equality and progress on national truth-telling, representation and treaty.

Provide access to justice

People have access to timely, person-centred justice to protect their rights.

Build understanding of human rights

People in Australia understand human rights and are committed and able to promote and protect them in their daily lives.

Advocate for a National Human Rights Framework

Human rights are protected in an effective, modern national framework.

Embed human rights

Governments, businesses, organisations and institutions embed human rights in their operations.

Advance human rights internationally

Human rights are advanced through international engagement and cooperation including with the United Nations and other National Human Rights Institutions.

Build an effective human rights organisation

The Australian Human Rights Commission is sustainable, integrated, efficient, innovative and accountable.

Outcomes

- The Commission strengthens its partnerships and engagement with First Peoples organisations and communities.
- The Australian Government is committed to realising First Peoples' human rights including by supporting the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), effective First Peoples participation and representation, national truth telling and treaty making.

- The Commission delivers a sustainable, fair, accessible and timely inquiry and conciliation service for those alleging discrimination and breaches of human rights.
- The Commission enables effective legal and cultural change through regulatory action towards safer, respectful and more equitable workplaces in Australia.

- The Commission's education work increases the capability of people in government, parliament, the education sector and the community to promote and protect human rights and to prevent and address discrimination.

- The Australian Government and the Australian Parliament support and implement the national human rights reform agenda proposed in the Commission's Free and Equal project.

- The Commission engages with Australian governments and parliaments to protect and embed human rights in relevant laws, policies, instruments and agreements.
- The Commission engages with government, organisations and institutions to protect and embed human rights in their governance, operations and culture.

- The Commission strengthens human rights through technical cooperation and exchange and by engaging as an A status National Human Rights Institution in the international human rights system.

- Our people, resources and systems are healthy, sustainable, integrated, effective and efficient.

Strategic priorities

- Develop and implement a **national education strategy** to improve awareness, understanding and acceptance of human rights.
- Advocate for the adoption of an **Australian Human Rights Act, modernised anti-discrimination legislation and the National Anti-Racism Framework**.
- Strengthen the **sustainability of the Commission's human rights and discrimination complaint service** to ensure it is accessible, efficient and timely.
- Design and implement **cross-cutting, whole-of-Commission** human rights projects.
- Work with Australian governments and their agencies, to **embed human rights** into their operations and promote a culture of protecting people's rights.
- Develop structures, roles, practices and culture to **enhance the integration and impact** of the Commission's work.
- Continue to build an **organisational culture that enables diversity, inclusion, innovation, wellbeing and cultural safety**.

Our plan on a page



**Australian
Human Rights
Commission**

GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001
Telephone: (02) 9284 9600
National Information Service: 1300 656 419
General enquiries: 1300 369 711
TTY: 1800 620 241
Website: www.humanrights.gov.au

2026
2030
STRATEGIC PLAN