



Australian Human
Rights Commission

Corporate Plan

2024-2025

Covering the period
2024-25 to 2027-28



humanrights.gov.au

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For further information about the Australian Human Rights Commission, please visit www.humanrights.gov.au.

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1 Preface

Human rights are the blueprint for a decent, dignified life for all. When human rights are respected, our lives are better and our communities are stronger, healthier, safer and more prosperous.

As the Accountable Authority of the Commission, I am pleased to present our 2024–25 Corporate Plan. This plan covers the four-year period to 2027–28, as required under section 35(1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). It identifies the strategic and operating framework in which the Commission operates and the actions we will take to achieve our purpose.

The Commission’s landmark Free and Equal Report last year highlighted the inadequacy of existing human rights protections and provided a roadmap for reform. Key reform priorities include a national Human Rights Act and modernised, comprehensive and effective national anti-discrimination laws.

Other priorities include expanding our work to address racism and implementing new regulatory powers to address sexual harassment, sex discrimination and other unlawful conduct.

Our vision is an Australian society in which human rights are respected, promoted and protected and every person is free and equal in dignity and rights. The actions set out in this plan are directed towards achieving this vision.



Hugh de Kretser

President

2 Our vision and purpose

An Australian society in which human rights are respected, protected and promoted through independent investigation and resolution of complaints, exercise of regulatory functions, contributions to law and policy reforms, research, education, partnerships, and monitoring and reporting on human rights.

- AHRC PBS Outcome Statement

As Australia's national human rights institution, **our vision** is an Australian society in which human rights are respected, promoted and protected. Where every person is free and equal in dignity and rights. Where the Commission is connected to Australian communities and is a valued national institution having a positive impact on the major human rights priorities facing Australia.

As Australia's national human rights institution **our purpose** is to promote and protect the human rights of everyone in Australia.

We do this through advising all arms of government and a range of public and private institutions; contributing to stronger law, policy and practice; delivering an accessible and effective investigation and conciliation service; supporting meaningful cultural change towards safer, respectful and more equitable workplaces through our role as a regulator in relation to the positive duty in the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, engaging inclusively with civil society communities and the private sectors; raising human rights awareness and providing human rights education; and working with partners to build a stronger culture of respect for human rights.

Our statutory functions require us to undertake activities, including:

- promoting understanding, acceptance and public discussion of human rights in Australia (including through our special purpose Commissioners);
- inquiring into, and attempting to conciliate, complaints of unlawful discrimination, and complaints about conduct that may breach human rights;
- reporting to Parliament on acts or practices that may be inconsistent or contrary to human rights, including making recommendations for government action or improved laws that would improve compliance with Australia's international human rights obligations;
- promoting human rights and issues protected by federal discrimination law (including through efforts to strengthen understanding of and compliance with human rights and discrimination laws, such as the preparation of guidelines, developing and monitoring disability standards, our intervention function and considering applications for temporary exemptions under relevant discrimination laws);
- undertaking research, educational and other programs for promoting human rights, including by reporting to Parliament on the status of enjoyment of human rights by children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- examining laws and proposed laws for consistency with human rights.

Our regulatory functions

As of 12 December 2023, the Commission is responsible for monitoring and assessing compliance with the positive duty in section 47C of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth).

The Commission's **regulatory functions** under the AHRC Act include:

- to inquire into a duty holder's compliance with the positive duty
- to ensure compliance with the positive duty.

The Commission also has **statutory functions**:

- to promote an understanding and acceptance, and public discussion, of the positive duty
- to undertake research and educational programs in relation to the positive duty.

The Commission has published a [Statement of Intent](#) on its website that outlines how it will deliver on the [Minister's expectations](#) with respect to fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. The Commission has also published its [Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#) to provide simple and clear information about how the Commission intends to perform its functions in relation to the positive duty.



3 Our goals and values

Our strategic goals reflect our vision and purpose statement. They guide our strategic priorities and core work.

Our **goals** are to:

- improve enjoyment of human rights by all, supporting access to justice and remedies for people and communities whose rights are breached;
- strengthen Australia's human rights framework, embedding human rights issues at the national level;
- walk with Australia's First Nations communities and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' priorities through our work,
- ensure better understanding of, and respect for, human rights so people and communities take action to defend human rights in their own contexts;

- ensure the Commission is sustainable into the future and able to strategically implement its statutory mandate; and
- maintain our international standing as a strong National Human Rights Institution representing human rights in Australia and contributing to human rights globally.

Our **values** are reflected in the work that we do, and in how we work with our partners and each other. These values are complementary to the Australian Public Service Values as set out in the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth).

Commission staff and statutory office holders value and promote:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Integrity
- Empowerment
- Collaboration



4 Who we are

The Commission is an independent statutory organisation, established by the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth) and exercising functions under Australia's four federal discrimination laws. We work to ensure that human rights are respected, protected and promoted in Australia and internationally. The Commission has specific responsibilities under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), and a regulatory role for assessing and monitoring compliance with section 47C of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth).

We operate as a Corporate Commonwealth Entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). Our strategic priorities and operations are determined independently of government in line with our internal governance framework.

We are accredited internationally as an 'A status' national human rights institution (NHRI). This accreditation is regularly reviewed through United Nations sanctioned processes by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) with the Commission successfully achieving reaccreditation in November 2023. To achieve 'A status', NHRIs must be established and operate in compliance with the *United Nations Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights* - commonly known as the 'Paris Principles'. The Paris Principles require us to operate in a robust, independent manner to provide accountability for human rights in Australia.

5 Our leadership team

The 2024-25 planning period continues the significant ongoing work of the Commission as Australia's National Human Rights Institution, and our Commissioners as statutory office holders. This Corporate Plan sets out work of our new Commissioners who have commenced their term with significant reform agendas, as well as the continued work of established Commissioners progressing significant systems reforms.

Our work is led by a President, seven Commissioners and the Chief Executive.



Katie Kiss
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner



Robert Fitzgerald AM
Age Discrimination Commissioner



Rosemary Kayess
Disability Discrimination Commissioner



Giridharan Sivaraman
Race Discrimination Commissioner



Ms Leanne Smith
Chief Executive



Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM FAAL
President (term ceased 30 July 2024)



Anne Hollonds
National Children's Commissioner



Lorraine Finlay
Human Rights Commissioner

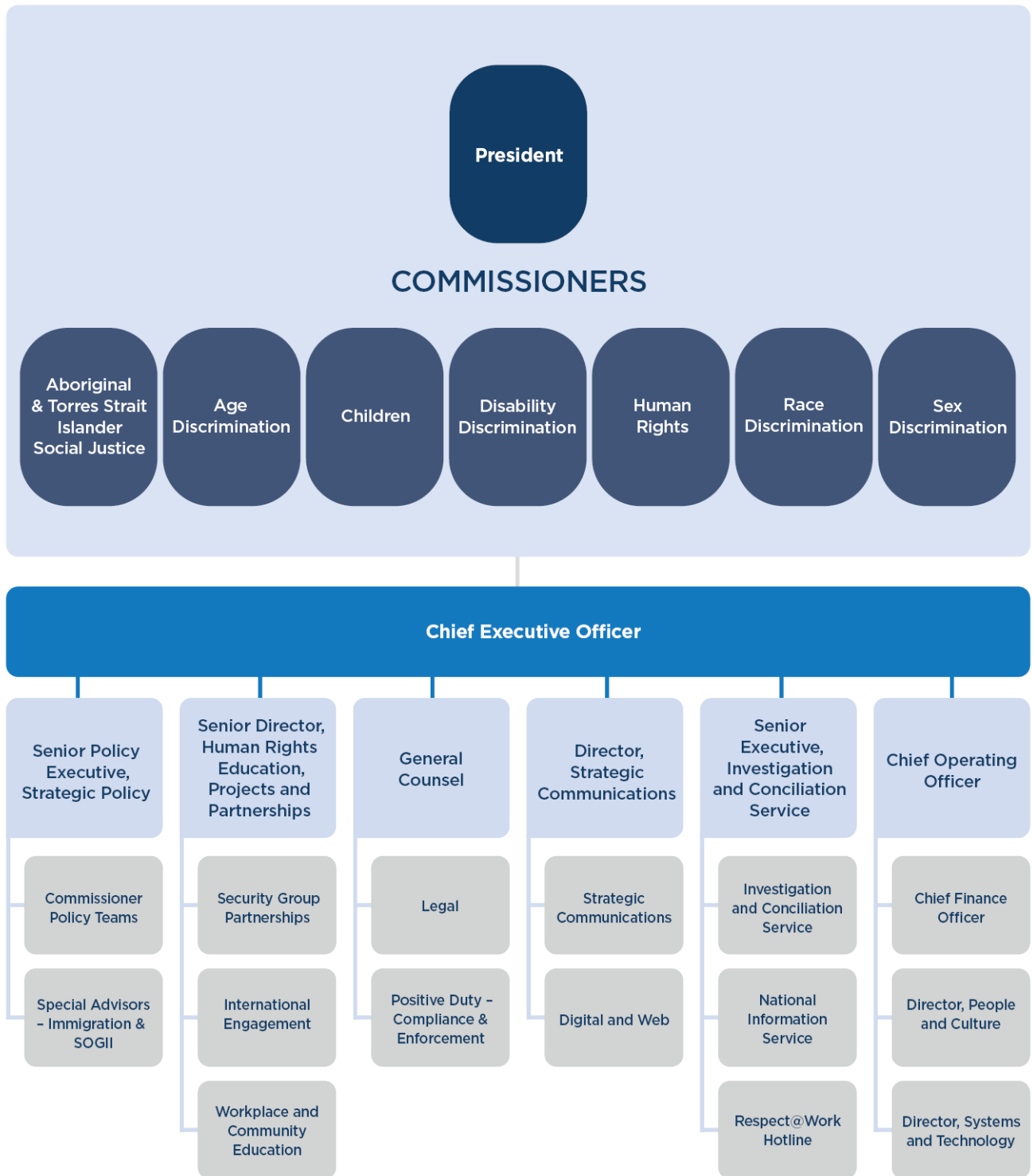


Dr Anna Cody
Sex Discrimination Commissioner



Hugh de Kretser
President (term commenced 31 July 2024)

Our organisational structure



6 Key activities, how we work

There is no simple way to solve complex human rights issues. Accordingly, we adopt a range of differing approaches to fulfilling our statutory functions and achieving our purpose.

Some of the activities we conduct on an ongoing or regular basis, such as complaint handling under federal discrimination law, statutory reports on the human rights status of children and Indigenous peoples, and educational outreach. Other key activities are longer term projects undertaken for a defined period, such as major inquiries, engagement in United Nation human rights scrutiny processes such as the upcoming Universal Periodic Review and partnership programs with other government entities, business and, community sectors.

Other activities require strategic and consistent ongoing efforts by the Commission on human rights issues – through our advocacy or engagement – such as our applications to the courts, submissions to Parliament and government, and coalition building with human rights partners across Australia, in the Asia-Pacific region and internationally.

As Australia's National Human Rights Institution, the multiple functions and activities of all our work are conducted through the methodology of human rights-based approach (HRBA) of participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and legality. We have a strong specialist expertise in this practice, and use this to elevate the voices of people, including children and young people, who don't always have a platform. We do this through our conciliation process, statutory reports, projects, and partnerships. In doing so, we utilise practices such as applying a trauma informed principle to our work, utilising narrative story-telling to provide opportunities for individuals to give voice to their own experiences of human rights, building in the time and practice – particularly in our work with First Nations people – to listen deeply to those impacted by breaches of their rights and utilise co-design approaches in our projects and partnerships to develop new approaches grounded in human rights principles.

6.1 Strategic Priorities 2024-25

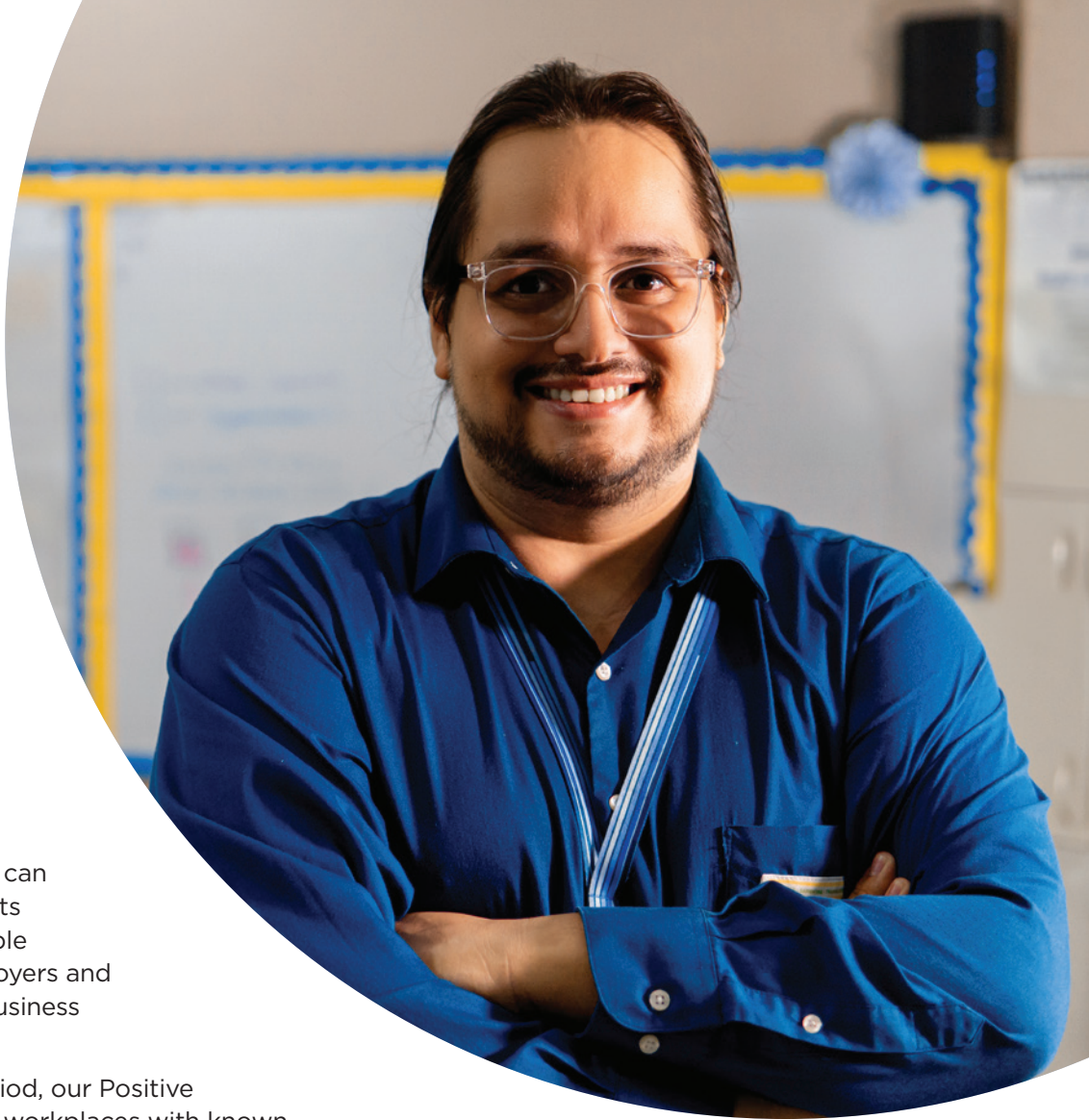
Improve enjoyment of human rights by all, supporting access to justice and remedies for people and communities whose rights are breached.

Human rights protection needs to be a central part of laws, policies and practices, to build a fairer and more inclusive Australia. The advocacy of the Commission, as well as the partnerships we engage in, help us to positively influence laws, policies and practices and drive other practical changes.

One of our core functions is to help people resolve complaints of unlawful discrimination and other breaches of human rights through our complaint handling service. People can complain to us about discriminatory treatment in many areas of public life or breaches of their human rights.

Our conciliation service often resolves complaints without any need for recourse to the court and achieves systemic improvements in many areas of public life, including employment and access to goods and services. The Commission will continue to focus on reducing the backlog of complaints in 2024-25 awaiting conciliation utilising the short-term funding provided by Government to address this issue in October 2022. The backlog resulted from the significant and sustained increase in discrimination and human rights complaints stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic which has created a legacy caseload that is being reduced, although at a slower pace than anticipated due to ongoing very high complaint numbers, particularly complaints alleging disability discrimination and discrimination and harassment under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth).

We continue with the operationalisation of the regulatory framework for ensuring compliance with the positive duty under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). Our regulatory



functions are enabled through powers to inquire into compliance, make findings of non-compliance, issue compliance notices that can be enforced by the courts and enter into enforceable undertakings with employers and persons conducting a business or undertaking.

During this planning period, our Positive Duty Team will focus on workplaces with known significant drivers and risk factors, including intersectional and marginalised workers, where engagement will create opportunity for broad influence and effect meaningful cultural change. We will conduct systems-based engagement with workplaces using both voluntary engagement and a suite of regulatory tools.

The work that we do as a regulator will be underpinned by the principles of regulator best practices including:

- continuous improvement and building trust
- a risk-based and data-driven approach
- collaboration and engagement

and is consistent with our wider approaches at the Commission.

We will continue to commit to best practice community engagement and truth telling in all of our work. This includes engagement with Jewish and Palestinian communities, led by the Race Discrimination Commissioner, to consider the domestic impacts of the ongoing war in Gaza and to identify and address the reported rise in anti-semitism, anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia over the past year.

In 2024-25, the Commission will also conduct a groundbreaking prevalence study into racism in universities, with a particular focus on anti-semitism, Islamophobia and the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Sex Discrimination Commissioner will continue the work championing existing protections among LGBTIQ+ communities, building awareness of threats to LGBTIQ+ rights and advocating for inclusive and just legislation and practices. The Respect@Work 'speaking from experience' project will identify the historic experiences of sexual harassment of marginalised communities.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner will initiate a national engagement project to hear from First Nations people about how to move forward after the Voice Referendum and how to progress and utilise mechanisms to realise rights.

Strengthen Australia's Human Rights Framework, embedding human rights issues at the national level.

We have a longstanding record of drawing national attention to pressing human rights issues, raising community awareness, and encouraging positive action by governments, businesses and others. We will continue to advocate for, and work with Government towards, a National Human Rights Framework as set out in the Commission's Free+Equal project and supported by the May 2024 report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, to ensure robust national protections of human rights and accountability measures. This includes advancing a national Human Rights Act to ensure the effective and comprehensive protection of human rights in Australia.

We will continue to advocate for reform of all federal discrimination laws to ensure they can meet the needs of 21st century Australia. This includes the Disability Discrimination Commissioner's focus on desegregation, and advocacy for reforms to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DDA) in line with recommendations made by the Disability Royal Commission, as well as significant work from the Disability Rights Team providing advice on DDA education, premises and transport standards.

The Age Discrimination Commissioner will continue advocacy focused on elder abuse with focus on strengthening safeguarding measures, policies and laws, as well as research and training to understand and address age stereotyping in employment and in care settings.

We will continue to monitor and report on significant human rights issues through our statutory reports to identify issues of discrimination, exclusion and unfair treatment. The National Children's Commissioner will focus on setting out a case for child justice reform

nationally, through the National Children's Reports, and give voice to children and young people so their rights are embedded in national frameworks, such as child protection, family violence and early childhood development.

The Commission will continue to engage with government to ensure robust protections against torture and cruel treatment, consistent with Australia's obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). We will continue to monitor immigration detention facilities, including both centre-focused and thematic inspections, and report specifically on the use of solitary confinement in youth detention centres.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner will draft the first of three Social Justice Reports (during her five-year term) outlining key human rights issues affecting First Nations peoples.

We will deliver for Government endorsement, a National Anti-Racism Framework led by the Race Discrimination Commissioner, with evidence on key measures of racism in Australia. This includes leading an independent study to better understand and address the prevalence of both interpersonal and systemic racism at universities.

The Human Rights Commissioner is leading the Future Emergency Responses Project, which aims to develop a human rights emergency response framework to embed human rights in future emergency and disaster responses in Australia. The first phase of the project applies a human rights lens to Australia's COVID-19 pandemic response measures and seeks to better understand its human rights impacts with a view to improving future emergency responses. The second phase will specifically consider responses to natural disasters, including bushfires and floods, from a human rights perspective.

Walk with Australia's First Nations communities and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' priorities through our work.

The Commission continues to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart as the framework for progress and works to ensure government, the private sector and civil society acknowledge and implement the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination, participation in decision making, respect for and protection of culture, and equality and non-discrimination.

Across the Commission, we continue to provide leadership and positioning on the need for better protection of human rights of First Nations peoples, and their participation in decision making, consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We continue to build and support partnerships with First Nations peoples and organisations to promote their rights and ensure government accountability for outcomes, such as through the Close the Gap Coalition and Closing the Gap processes.

Ensure better understanding of, and respect for, human rights so people and communities take action to defend human rights in their own context.

The Commission will continue to implement our engagement strategy with government, the Parliament, the corporate sector, peak bodies, academia, NGOs, civil society, philanthropic organisations and international partners.

We will seek to increase our workforce and community education team's capacity to deliver human rights education and training programs across Australia, and across sectors.

We will deliver significant projects that ensure better understanding, evidence and guidance so people and communities can take actions to support and defend human rights. This includes implementing IncludeAbility 2.0 to promote employment equity and pay equity for people with disability, implementing a national survey on young people's understanding and experiences of consent education, and the development of guidance materials on technology and human rights.

We seek to broaden engagement and advance public discourse about human rights through our engagement with civil society and non-government organisations.

Maintain our international standing as a strong National Human Rights Institution representing human rights

As an NHRI, we engage in GANHRI, the Asia Pacific Forum, and UN mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council and human rights treaty bodies, to provide a credible, independent voice on the status of human rights in Australia. This is part of the Commission's responsibility to lift the consideration of human rights across law, policy and practice.

This planning period, we seek to build greater understanding of our A-Status accreditation under the Paris Principles, and our role as Australia's NHRI through our engagements with stakeholders across government and civil society. The Commission will continue to provide a robust independent perspective on Australia's human rights performance through UN treaty commitments and Human Rights Council engagement as Australia's A-Status NHRI. This planning period includes significant work in preparing for the Commission's contribution for the 5th Universal Periodic Review.

The Commission will continue to implement our regional and bilateral engagement programs including in Vietnam, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) and with ASEAN. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on Pacific NHRIs.

7 Operating context

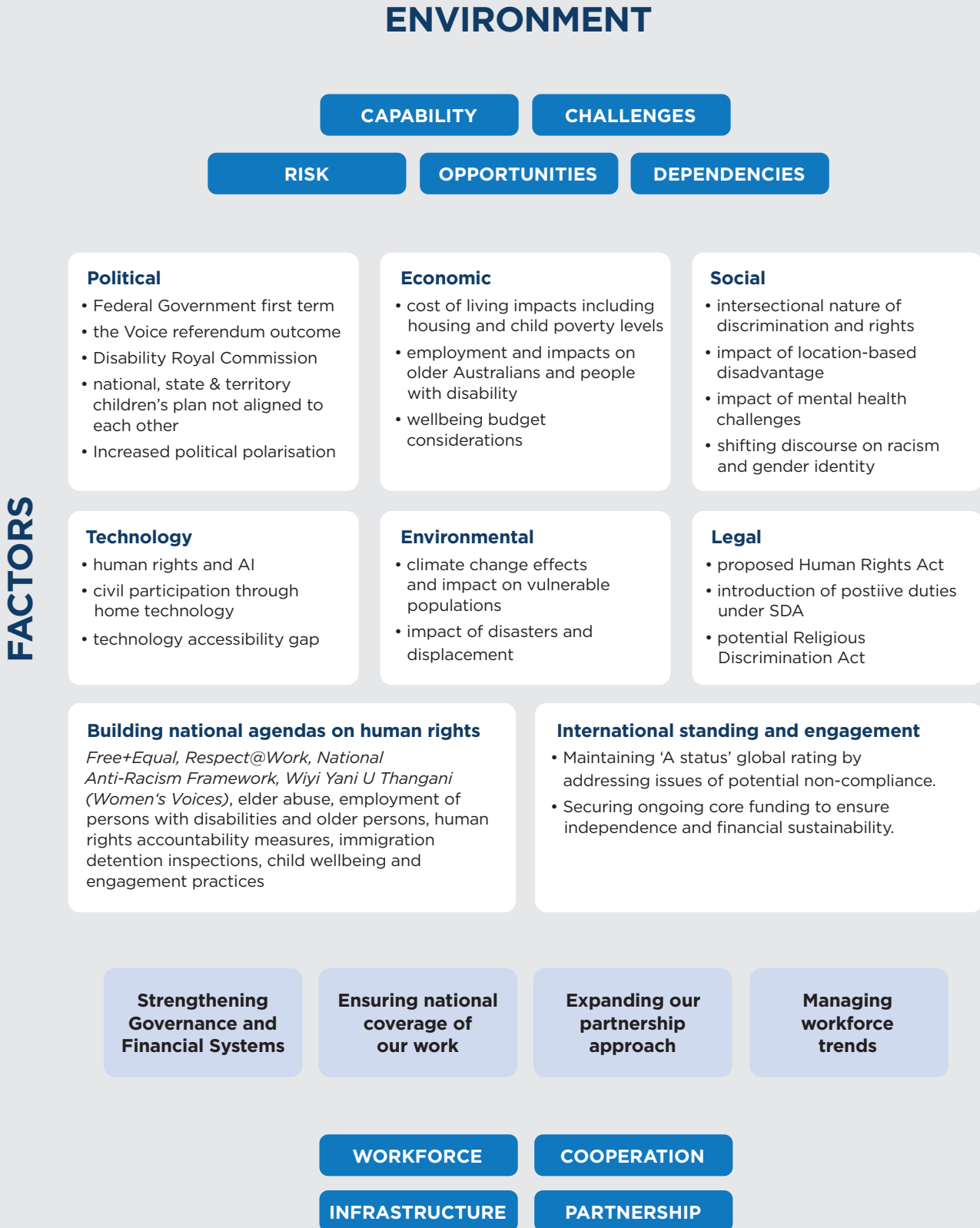
7.1 Environment

Our work involves a mixture of forward-looking, agenda-setting programs that seek to strengthen Australia's human rights framework, as well as reactive support where we provide human rights expertise and input to government priorities, parliamentary processes, relevant court proceedings and through the operation of our national information service and complaint-handling functions.

Each year we examine our forward operating environment to gather information about current events and issues, across political, economic, social, technology, legal and environmental spheres as part of our cross-Commission planning process.

1. The current environment presents the most significant opportunity to implement impactful reforms across human rights in this country for some time. The Commission's Free+Equal Report, coupled with the recommendations from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights in the report of its Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework and the recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission provide the potential impetus for reforms and are widely supported. There is an increased focus and understanding of intersectionality and human rights in the public discourse which provides opportunity for collaborations and partnerships.
2. The international human rights landscape is having an increased impact on the domestic human rights climate. This is particularly acute concerning the conflict in Israel and Gaza and its impact on our communities in Australia. There is increased polarisation across the political and social spectrum, which is reflected in the public discourse and a fast-moving political environment. There are significant changes in how we use and engage with technology, and the impact that has on our social and economic lives.

The figure below shows the key factors identified in the assessment for the 2024–25 (to 2028) environment.



7.2 Capabilities

The Commission continues to focus on the capabilities of its people, infrastructure and resources, with a goal to ensure that the Commission is adequately and sustainably resourced into the future and able to strategically implement its statutory mandate. The Commission will continue to advocate for an increase in core funding for our existing statutory functions.

The Commission will continue to strengthen our workplace culture both in-person and in remote working teams. This includes strengthening our Corporate & Enabling Services to develop a roadmap for updating our policies, internal communications, increased support for staff professional development and wellbeing. We are working across the Commission, including through the Organisational Culture and Development Governance Sub-Committee and Diversity Committee, to uplift our practices. This will initially take place through a review of the Commission’s employee lifecycle enhancing various touch points through workforce planning, recruitment, selection, onboarding, performance development, learning and development, recognition and offboarding. Through the review, the Commission’s workforce planning capability will be strengthened.

Capability and our workforce

The Commission will develop and implement a workforce planning approach to support and build a workforce that meets the Commission’s current and future needs. Workforce planning will be integrated into business planning. Workforce planning is currently being integrated with our enhanced recruitment, selection, onboarding, capability development processes to improve forecasting capabilities.

The Commission will continue to prioritise workforce health, safety and wellbeing, undertaking section risks assessments (including psychosocial safety), updating prevention and response plans and evaluating control measures. The Commission will continue to focus on enhancing cultural competency, ensuring cultural safety and improving the recruitment and retention of First Nations staff.

In October 2022, the Government provided additional resourcing to the Commission to undertake its functions as Australia’s national human rights institution as well as additional funding for new responsibilities to implement a National Anti-Racism Strategy and the Respect@Work report recommendations. Each of these proposals included consideration of the appropriate mix of average staffing level and supplier expenditure to deliver these functions.

In October 2023 the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework (SCF) was released by Public Service Minister, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher. The SCF applies to entities that employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999* and aims to strengthen APS capability by publishing targets to reduce inappropriate outsourcing of core work.

Following the reset of the Commission’s staffing structure via the 2022-23 Commonwealth budget process, the Commission ensures all core functions are delivered by Commission staff and limits third party outsourcing to those skills and expertise required by the Commission on a periodic or ad-hoc basis, rather than on an ongoing basis. This includes skills required for finite, discrete programs of work the Commission undertakes to deliver on contracts with external funders. The targets below reflect the opportunity for the Commission to use ongoing and non-ongoing staff as funding permits to develop campaign content using internal subject matter experts; graphic design of Commission publications and design, monitoring and evaluation resources. The targets have been measured following a review of supplier expenditure included in work and project plans over the forward estimates.

\$m	2024 -2025	2025 -2026	2026 -2027	2027 -2028
AHRC target¹	0.202	0.045	0.005	-

¹ Target reflects an adjustment to supplier expenditure only as required by the SCF. This will be offset by increased employee expenditure.

We continue to operate in a hybrid working environment and following a successful move to new premises in April 2024 we will complete the post-relocation work on our Sydney office, while seeking effective ways to support all of our staff working remotely and in other cities.

Capability through digital infrastructure and investment

Information and communications technology (ICT) has a crucial role in supporting the organisation's communication, collaboration and accountability – both internally and externally. Investing in this aspect of our capability has been challenging, given our long-standing fiscal constraints and as a small Commonwealth agency. This planning period, we will develop a roadmap for the implementation of internal audit and other recommendations, which will include improving our ICT infrastructure and enhancing our cyber security and process automation. We will finalise the decommissioning of remaining legacy ICT infrastructure, which will complete the process of transitioning to Microsoft 365 cloud-based systems.

We continue to implement the Commission website roadmap, including upgrades on content and style of the existing website, as we also scope and plan for a new website.



New Sydney office

7.3 Risk oversight systems and key risk management

We adopt a positive risk management culture that promotes an open and proactive approach to managing risk. We achieve this through our governance, risk and compliance mechanisms, such as our Internal Audit function, our Audit and Risk Committee and our Governance Framework subcommittees – Partnerships and Projects, Budget, Strategic Issues and Engagement and Organisational Development and Culture.

Our existing risk management framework provides a mechanism for proactively identifying and mitigating risks across the organisation, and for monitoring the operating environment. It includes a risk appetite statement, that identifies the Commission's attitude towards risk and establishes the amount of risk that we are willing to accept in the work we undertake.

The Commission will continue to embed the enterprise-wide risk assessment conducted by our internal auditors in 2023 into our regular systems of risk planning and mitigation practices. This includes streamlining our risk identification process and templates, updating our risk profiles and strengthening planning processes. As part of this risk planning process, we have completed a comprehensive risk assessment of our new regulatory powers at the Commission, including a robust risk identification and mitigation process.

The risk management framework is tailored to meet the Commission's needs. Our positive risk culture encourages the practice of risk identification and the appropriate mitigation of actual, potential, or perceived risks. By identifying, monitoring and reviewing these risks the Commission ensures new risks are identified and existing risks remain appropriately managed.

The Commission has identified and manages actual, potential or perceived risks within the below profile categories:

- **Key strategic and foundational enterprise risks:** uncertainties that exist or threaten delivery of the Commission’s strategic purpose – such as ensuring the Commission’s governance arrangements are effective, working within a constrained funding environment, maintaining our reputation as a strong independent NHRI, ensuring strong relationships with key stakeholders and partners, and our ability to respond quickly and effectively to a changing political landscape.
- **Current and topical risks:** risks that relate to current and emerging issues – such as ensuring the successful delivery of purpose funded initiatives, responding quickly and effectively to a cyber security incident, and ensuring an engaged and high-performing workforce in a context where the Commission’s work and workload can impact staff health and wellbeing.
- **Compliance and systems risks:** risks associated with core compliance obligations and systems – such as ensuring staff adhere to internal and legislative compliance requirements, ensuring the Commission manages information effectively and complies with its records management requirements and ensuring the Commission has in place effective physical and information security arrangements to protect its assets and information.
- **Particular Risks:** such as fraud, Protective Security, child safety and wellbeing, and work health and safety.
- **Regulatory Risk** – risks associated with the Commission’s new regulatory function - such as grooming and regulatory capture, jurisdictional challenges, conflicting legislation and regulation, political, public, media or stakeholder perception or resistance.

Through our implementation of the Enterprise Risk Assessment conducted by our internal auditors in 2023, the Commission will continue to improve our risk maturity through enterprise risk identification, preventative and mitigating controls, and a plan of action to improve these controls.

Examples of preventative and mitigating controls include:

- Strategic and foundational enterprise risks regarding governance controls include our governance framework, transparency of actions and decisions through well-recorded minutes and action items, the Commission’s induction process and training which will be reviewed this planning period.
- Financial management and sustainability risk controls include clearly documented budget processes, budget planning, forecasting and reporting with additional training provided to budget managers to improve processes.

Advocacy, engagement and programs are effective and delivered as planned with controls including our Corporate Planning process and quarterly reporting processes, with future actions planned to improve coordination and streamlining of work.

7.4 Cooperation and partnerships

The Commission positions partnerships as one of its core values and cooperation with government, corporate sector, peak bodies, academia, philanthropic, NGOs, civil society and international organisations is a core part of our work. These partnerships support our legislative mandates and our strategic priorities across the Commission.

Our partnerships with government departments and agencies include the Attorney-General’s Department, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Department of Defence, Australian Federal Police, Department of Social Services, Department of Education, and Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts. Our partnerships with other sectors in Australia include a broad range of NGOs and community organisations, education peak bodies and universities, legal services and the corporate sector.

Our partnerships internationally include GANHRI, the Asia-Pacific Forum, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade funded bilateral ASEAN partnerships in our region and engagement with other NHRIs.

Partnerships increase our capability through shared skills and resources and create a collective ability to achieve outcomes greater than individuals or organisations acting alone.

Working together to solve problems through multi-year arrangements also builds the impetus and capacity of our partners to implement positive changes and increase the capacity of personnel to contribute their best. We have

learned that medium to long-term collaboration delivers real reform. Partnerships ensure that the Commission can work on responses to identified issues with stakeholders across multiple years and beyond what our ongoing core funding allows. This approach is in line with institutional reform learnings, which recognise that real improvements come from thoughtful and sustained response.

The figure below captures the range of partner categories in our forward workplan.





8 Measuring our performance

Measuring our impact (what difference did we make? what benefit resulted?), in the context and nature of our work, is important but complex. The ultimate results of our activities are often long-term and incrementally achieved.

The Commission utilises a monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning approach to our work. In this performance measurement framework, our purpose and functions are reflected in organisational goals and outcomes that tell an entity level 'performance story'. The outcomes are pitched to a level where we can reasonably expect to contribute to them.

Progress indicators are mapped to each of the outcomes. They are designed to provide reasonable evidence of contribution to the outcome, and include outputs in addition to, process and outcome measures. They are, in turn, supported by data from monitoring and evaluation strategies implemented across the Commission's programs and services. While some of these measure the direct **attributions** of the Commission's work, others are to capture the stories and case studies of the Commission to document our **contributions** to the outcomes. The wider impact of our work is best understood when seen in the context of multi-year programs, advocacy and submissions and is reported through case examples or 'stories of change'.

These strategies range from the basic capture of output to more complex mixed-methods evaluation within a results-based accountability framework which outlines: What did we do? How well did we do it? And what was the change or outcome that took place? The Commission's fluid operational environment, limited resources, eight statutory officeholder portfolios, with multiple programs, and the nature of the work, means any monitoring and evaluation strategy must be proportional to the activity and available capacity and resources.

Performance measurement framework

Goal	Outcome	Performance expectation	Indicator (and PBS target) (feasible qualitative/quantitative measures of the expected performance in this reporting year)	2024 2025	2025 2026	2026 2027	2027 2028
<p>1 Improving enjoyment of human rights by all, supporting access to justice and remedies for people and communities whose rights are breached.</p>	<p>1.1 We deliver a fair and effective investigation and conciliation of complaints service.</p> <p>PBS CRITERION</p>	<p>Our investigation and conciliation of complaints and dispute resolution meet performance indicators on timeliness, efficiency and service user satisfaction.</p> <p>Our investigation and conciliation of complaints and dispute resolution processes have systemic and educational outcomes.</p>	<p>85% of complaints are finalised in under 12 months.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p> <p>40% of complaints are resolved by conciliation.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p> <p>85% of parties to complaints are satisfied with the service they receive.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p> <p>Instances where the terms on which investigation and conciliation disputes are resolved include systemic outcomes that accord with the objectives of the law.</p> <p>Instances where participation in the investigation and conciliation process results in increased understanding of rights and responsibilities in the law.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>1.2 We support meaningful cultural change towards safer, respectful and more equitable workplaces in Australia.</p>	<p>We support meaningful cultural change through inquiry into and ensuring compliance with the positive duty, and assist duty holders to achieve this through education, research and public discussion.</p>	<p>Increase in duty holders':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the positive duty obligation • taking proactive steps to eliminate and prevent relevant unlawful conduct in the workplace. <p>PBS TARGET</p>				
<p>2 Strengthening Australia's human rights framework, embedding human rights issues at a national level.</p>	<p>2.1 The leadership and advocacy of the President and Commissioners on thematic areas or identified human rights issues, improves the enjoyment of human rights by affected groups.</p>	<p>Our research, reporting and advice influences and builds capacity in decision makers and other stakeholders to take action to address the identified human rights issues.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p>	<p>Research, reporting and advice activities of the Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are viewed as evidenced, persuasive and credible by stakeholders • increase understanding of the human rights issues and impacts raised • strengthen stakeholder capacity to promote and advocate for the human rights issues raised. 	✓	✓	✓	✓
			<p>Instances of programs attracting strategic partnerships that advance the priority human rights issues we have advocated for.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
			<p>Instances of improved Federal and state government policy, practice and legislative change that reflect our advice.</p> <p>High proportion of Committee inquiry reports reflect and cite the Commission's advice.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓

Goal	Outcome	Performance expectation	Indicator (and PBS target) (feasible qualitative/quantitative measures of the expected performance in this reporting year)	2024 2025	2025 2026	2026 2027	2027 2028
<p>2 Strengthening Australia’s human rights framework, embedding human rights issues at a national level. (continued)</p>	<p>2.2 Law and policy-makers, at all levels, consider and address the human rights impacts we identify through our submissions, inquiries, research, reports and United Nations engagement.</p> <p>PBS CRITERION</p>	<p>Parliamentary committee inquiry reports reflect the human rights issues raised in our submissions and recommendations.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p> <p>The number of recommendations to UN mechanisms made, and instances of recommendations implemented or referenced by Government.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p> <p>Arguments presented in our submissions to courts influence outcomes in a way that is consistent with human rights.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p>	<p>High proportion of Committee inquiry reports reflect and cite the Commission’s advice.</p> <p>Instances of our recommendations to UN mechanisms being reflected in treaty body concluding observations and other reports.</p> <p>Majority of our applications to the courts for leave to appear are accepted</p> <p>Instances of our court submissions reflected in the final judgment of the matter.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>2.3 The national human rights reform agenda proposed in the <i>Free & Equal: An Australian conversation on human rights</i> report is considered and addressed by the Parliament, government and the non-government sector.</p>	<p>Recommendations and actions in the report are addressed by the Attorney-General and Federal Parliament. The recommendations and actions in the Report inform and direct future reform.</p>	<p>The recommendations and actions in the report generate dialogue and receive public support and commitment from the Attorney-General and the non-government sector.</p>				
<p>3 Better understanding of, and respect for, human rights so people and communities take action to defend human rights in their own context.</p>	<p>3.1 Our education activities increase capability among individuals, communities and organisations to promote and protect human rights and address discrimination.</p> <p>PBS CRITERION</p>	<p>Participants in education activities benefit through achieving the intended human rights learning and capability objectives.</p> <p>Most participants in our adult training programs report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfaction with the quality and relevance of the training • increased understanding, expertise, reframed attitudes. <p>PBS TARGET</p>	<p>Learner satisfaction with Commission training is at 80% based on participant surveys of our learning courses.</p> <p>Number of organisations working with the Commission to develop human rights education/training activities.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓

Goal	Outcome	Performance expectation	Indicator (and PBS target) (feasible qualitative/quantitative measures of the expected performance in this reporting year)	2024 2025	2025 2026	2026 2027	2027 2028
<p>3 Better understanding of, and respect for, human rights so people and communities take action to defend human rights in their own context. (continued)</p>	<p>3.2 Our information resources, services, events and campaigns reach, inform and influence users and audiences.</p>	<p>Target audiences benefit from our information resources, services, campaigns and events.</p>	<p>Targeted audiences are reached, access our information resources and services, and participate in our events and campaigns indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average engagement rate of 2% or higher for Commission social media posts about our education and information activities. • High rates of participants finding our events and campaigns engaging and relevant. <p>Instances of legal information, resources, guidelines and exemption processes help employers and organisation to comply with Australian discrimination and human rights law.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>4 Maintaining our international standing as a strong human rights institution representing human rights in Australia and contributing to human rights advancement globally.</p>	<p>4.1 Our activities increase the capacity of vulnerable groups, communities and their advocates to understand and advocate for their rights.</p> <p>PBS CRITERION</p>	<p>Participants and stakeholders, in our consultations, research and education and informing activities experience participation, empowerment and benefit.</p>	<p>Instances of participants and stakeholders in our consultations and research activities report participation experiences that are beneficial and empowering.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<p>4.2 Our activities increase the capacity of governments, organisations, other groups and services to understand and address the human rights impact of their actions, particularly when working with vulnerable groups and communities.</p> <p>PBS CRITERION</p>	<p>Our activities with stakeholder organisations lead to systemic and sustained action, including changes to organisational policy and practice, to respect, protect and promote human rights in their context.</p> <p>PBS TARGET</p>	<p>Instances of stakeholders in our activities with organisations reporting that our work has contributed to increased understanding of the impact of their systems and operations on human rights.</p> <p>Instances of stakeholders in our activities with organisations making changes to organisational policy and practice, to respect, protect and promote human rights in their context.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
		<p>Our regional technical cooperation activities increase stakeholder capacity to advance national reform in partner states.</p>	<p>Instances of partners':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased knowledge and application of human rights frameworks, principles, and practices to advance human rights reform • practice/policy reform relating to human rights principles, which are reviewed or developed because of technical cooperation activities. 	✓	✓	✓	✓

Goal	Outcome	Performance expectation	Indicator (and PBS target) (feasible qualitative/quantitative measures of the expected performance in this reporting year)	2024 2025	2025 2026	2026 2027	2027 2028
<p>4 Maintaining our international standing as a strong human rights institution representing human rights in Australia and contributing to human rights advancement globally. (continued)</p>	<p>4.3 The Commission is compliant with the Paris Principles (Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions) and is assessed as an independent and effective national human rights institution.</p>	<p>The Commission maintains its 'A status' as assessed by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).</p>	<p>Compliance with the Paris Principles and/or remediation actions in train, e.g. <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Legislation Amendment (Selection and Appointment) Act 2022</i> (Cth).</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5 Ensuring that the Commission is sustainable into the future and able to strategically implement its statutory mandate.</p>	<p>5.1 The Commission has a clear strategic direction and confidently implements its mandate with secure and sustainable funding that is transparently and accountably managed.</p>	<p>The Commission maintains its compliance with the <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986</i> (Cth) and the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (Cth) (PGPA Act).</p>	<p>Completion of all requirements under the PGPA Act, including corporate accountability, annual reports and financial compliance. Implementation of appropriate governance and financial structures including number of recommendations adopted from the external reviews.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓



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