

Chapter 2:

Human Rights Education and Promotion

A central function of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is to undertake education programs that increase public awareness and generate discussion of human rights and anti-discrimination issues within Australia.

The Commission's legislative responsibilities are:

1. To promote an understanding and acceptance of, and compliance with, the relevant Act:
 - ◇ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act section 11(1)(g)
 - ◇ Racial Discrimination Act section 20(1)(b)
 - ◇ Sex Discrimination Act section 48(1)(d)
 - ◇ Disability Discrimination Act section 67(1) (g)
 - ◇ Age Discrimination Act section 53(aa)
2. To undertake research and education programs for the purpose of promoting the objects of the relevant Act:
 - ◇ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act section 11(1)(h)
 - ◇ Racial Discrimination Act section 20(1)(c)
 - ◇ Sex Discrimination Act section 48(1)(e)
 - ◇ Disability Discrimination Act section 67(1)(h)
 - ◇ Age Discrimination Act section 53(ac)

Human rights education is also an international obligation which Australia has consistently supported. In the earliest international articulation of universal human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the General Assembly proclaimed:

every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect of these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance.

All work undertaken by the Commission has a human rights educative base, from the handling of individual complaints of discrimination or harassment to the conduct of National Inquiries which involve important human right issues, such as the detention of children in immigration detention.

Education and communications strategy

The Commission uses a range of strategies to communicate its key human rights messages to the community including:

- Regular media engagement by the President and Commissioners with metropolitan, regional and specialist press, radio and television outlets.
- The Commissioners and staff holding consultations with a range of NGOs (including peak bodies), community groups, parliamentarians, business and industry groups, academics and government officers.
- The development of an extensive and accessible website which includes human rights education materials for students, teachers, employers, government, community groups and interested individuals.
- Curriculum-linked human rights education materials for teachers and students.
- Preparation and distribution of plain English publications on human rights and discrimination, and translations of essential Commission information into 14 other languages.
- Organisation of promotional events such as the annual Human Rights Awards.

Specific human rights educational and promotional programs conducted by individual Commissioners are detailed later in this Report.

Media engagement

The Commission's communication strategies are predicated on the desire to target all Australians wherever they live and whatever their background, age or gender. The Commission uses the mainstream and specialist media to disseminate human rights messages and works with peak business and community groups in the development and delivery of informational and education material.

Engagement with the media is a crucial aspect of the Commission's public education function. Wherever possible the Commission engages in public debate through the print and electronic media to provide information to the public via journalists and editors.

The Commission also uses community announcements and niche or specialist media such as ethnic and Indigenous radio and press, as well as country and regional media outlets, to provide general information on the work of the Commission and of the Commissioners.

In 2005–06, the Commission issued **101 media releases and alerts**, and the President and Commissioners have had **15 opinion pieces** published in major metropolitan newspapers throughout Australia and have conducted approximately **600 media interviews** resulting in a significant range of press, radio and television coverage. Thousands of media inquiries were received.

Commissioners have contributed to public debate on human rights, equality and discrimination issues, including: age discrimination, terrorism legislation, refugees and asylum seekers, racial vilification and discrimination, Indigenous social justice, native title, sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, paid maternity leave, work and family balance, disability discrimination and advances in accessibility for people with a disability and on changes to legislation that may affect people's human rights.

The Commission also promotes the Human Rights Medal and Awards, which include a category to recognise an outstanding contribution to human rights through the print media, radio or television.

President John von Doussa has engaged in public debate on a range of human rights issues including anti-terrorism laws, the plight of David Hicks, migration legislation (especially as it relates to offshore processing of asylum seekers), bill of rights and the death penalty.

President von Doussa and Human Rights Commissioner Graeme Innes have given interviews about the national inquiry announced in April called *Same-Sex: Same Entitlements* – National Inquiry into Discrimination against People in Same-Sex Relationships: Financial and Work-Related Entitlements and Benefits.

Commissioner Innes has promoted the 2006 human rights art and essay competition and has commented on mental health funding, copyright access, accessible transport (especially aircraft and taxis) and the report of the National Inquiry into Employment and Disability, called *WORKability II: Solutions*.

Sex Discrimination Commissioner Pru Goward continues to engage in media debate on issues related to her work/life balance project. She has also spoken about superannuation, equal pay, the WorkChoices legislation, child care and the federal budget, and continues to target womens' magazines to deliver the message about women's rights and work/life balance to a broader audience.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, launched his 2005 Social Justice and Native Title reports at public events throughout Australia. There was national media coverage of most of the launches by print media, radio and television.

He has also continued to promote via the media the Indigenous Health Equality Campaign brought about by the 2005 Social Justice and Native Title reports. He has engaged in media debate about other relevant issues such as administrative arrangements for Indigenous affairs, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, family violence and abuse in Indigenous communities, Indigenous land use, native title agreements and the Palm Island Inquest.

As acting Race Discrimination Commissioner, Tom Calma did a range of interviews about the *Voices of Australia* project (for the 30th anniversary of the Racial Discrimination Act), racism in sport and issued a statement about violence, intimidation and racism on Sydney's southern beaches, in particular, Cronulla.

Prior to his departure in December 2005, Human Rights and acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner Dr Ozdowski conducted media interviews about the human rights dialogue, funding for mental health, the disability and employment Inquiry, education for people with disabilities and new welfare reforms. Many of his interviews related to the launch of the report *Not for Service: Experiences of injustice and despair in mental health care in Australia* produced by the Mental Health Council of Australia and Brain and Mind Research Institute in association with the Commission.

Community consultations

Community consultations are an important part of the Commission's human rights education program and provide a valuable exchange of information. The President, Commissioners and their staff met with a very wide range of peak bodies, community groups, NGOs, parliamentarians, business and industry groups, academics and government officers during the year.

NGO consultations

The Commission has begun a series of community/NGO fora around Australia to coincide with Commission meetings in each State and Territory. The purpose of these meetings is to share with key community organisations the current work of the Commission and to form networks that will enhance cooperation on national issues of human rights and equal opportunity.

In 2006, Commission meetings and the community fora were held in Adelaide (April) and Brisbane (June). More than 30 representatives of peak non-government organisations and other key community groups attended.

Other consultations include:

- The **acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner and staff** conducted over 100 meetings and made approximately 21 speeches. These included consultations in the course of, and in promoting follow up from,

the National Inquiry into Employment and Disability; the development of standards on access to premises; and continuing contact with a range of industry bodies, including public transport, health service providers, the financial services industry, TV and cinema organisations, local government and educational institutions. The unit has also continued regular contact with representatives from peak and state/territory disability advocacy groups.

- The **Sex Discrimination Commissioner and staff** were involved in approximately 130 meetings and consultations and made over 100 speeches. These consultations have been with community organisations and activists, academics, employers and employer groups, unions, Commonwealth Government officers, federal ministers and other members of Parliament.
- The **Race Discrimination Commissioner and staff** held 134 community consultation meetings. Of these 120 were with the Muslim community in association with the Muslim Community and Police Project and the Muslim Women's Forum. There were eight community forums in Victoria and seven in NSW.
- The **Human Rights Commissioner and staff** conduct meetings, consultations and media interviews on an ongoing basis. For 2005–06, Commissioner Ozdowski was involved in 39 meetings. Commissioner Innes was involved in 35 meetings.
- Over 150 organisations throughout all states and territories attended information sessions on the law and the complaint process run by **Complaint Handling Staff** or were visited by CHS staff. These organisations included community legal centres, Aboriginal legal centres, multicultural organisations, universities, disability groups, professional associations and unions. Locations visited included: Launceston and Hobart in Tasmania; Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Nowra, Moree, Tamworth and Narrabri in New South Wales; Brisbane; Melbourne; Darwin, Adelaide and Canberra.

Commission website – www.humanrights.gov.au

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's website is a major educative tool and is used widely by government, legal, community and employer organisations, the media, schools and individuals to obtain information about human rights and responsibilities, and anti-discrimination law and practice.

The Commission's website is maintained to ensure that the most up-to-date information is posted daily. All reports, submissions, media releases and other Commission publications are available online.

Web resources include an online complaints form and information for complainants and respondents, a range of curriculum-linked human rights education resources

for schools, information resources for employers, a legal section which provides full details of legislation and other legal issues, and information on the policy and educational work of the President and Commissioners.

Major additions and improvements in 2005–06

- Online information sheets published including: *Anti-Discrimination Laws and Employment*.
- Updates and additions to curriculum-linked human rights education resources published online including:
 - ◊ *Information for Students*
 - ◊ *Face the Facts* Education module (2005 update)
- Translations into community languages of the *Complaints guide* and *About HREOC* brochures.
- Implementation on the site of the *Funnelback* search engine developed by CSIRO as part of the search trial managed by the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), which has delivered significant search improvement.
- Online publication of Commission reports and publications including:
 - ◊ *Social Justice Report 2005*
 - ◊ *Native Title Report 2005*
 - ◊ *Ending Family Violence in Indigenous Communities*
 - ◊ *Face the Facts* (2005 update)
 - ◊ *Workability II: Report of National Inquiry into Disability and Employment*
 - ◊ *Voices of Australia*
 - ◊ *Rights of Passage: a dialogue with young Australians about human rights*
 - ◊ *On the Record – Guidelines for the prevention of discrimination in employment on the basis of criminal record*.
- Publication of speeches and other presentations by the President and Commissioners.
- *Human Rights Medal and Awards* website published to promote the Commission's annual Human Rights Awards competition.
- Publication of a range of legal submissions made to the federal parliament and other bodies by the Commission.

Statistics

The Commission uses a web statistics system which tracks the number of visitors the site has and how visitors are using the site. This allows the Commission to identify materials that are particularly successful or popular and where we have room for improvement.

Usage of the site has increased significantly over the year with approximately **8,371,613 page views** on the server during 2005–06. This equates to approximately **71,779,044 hits** on the site in total. This is an increase of 52 percent on website usage since the previous financial year.

A summary of statistical information is provided below:

Section	Home/Index page views	Section page views
<i>HREOC Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au	500 167	n/a
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice	64 056	636 369
<i>Complaints Information</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/complaints_information	34 737	189 290
<i>Disability Rights Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights	96 229	961 653
<i>Human Rights Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights	63 743	795 672
<i>Legal Information Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/legal	22 315	208 062
<i>Racial Discrimination Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination	79 270	438 960
<i>Sex Discrimination Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/sex_discrimination	179 318	622 387
<i>Information for Employers Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/info_for_employers	26 027	169 860
<i>Publications Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/publications	25 580	n/a
<i>Media Releases Index</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/media_releases	31 209	450 035
<i>Job Vacancies Homepage</i> www.humanrights.gov.au/jobs	42 442	58 420
<i>Human Rights Education Resources</i>	n/a	909 023

Human rights education for teachers and students

The Commission has developed a range of human rights education modules specifically for use in upper primary and secondary schools. These modules were developed in consultation with education experts and are linked to the curriculum of each state and territory education system.

Philosophy

The philosophy that guides the Commission's approach to human rights education is based on a critical methodology which balances the learning needs of students with the curriculum requirements of relevant subject areas.

The modules that make up the human rights education program draw students into real-life situations relevant to their own experiences, which can then be explored in the context of Australian and international law.

Such programs have the capacity to develop values of respect and tolerance and encourage young people to consider ways in which they can take an active role to address intolerance and discrimination in the communities in which they live.

Human rights education is promoted through:

1. *Knowledge*: provision of information about human rights and mechanisms for their protection;
2. *Values, beliefs and attitudes*: development of values, beliefs and attitudes, which uphold human rights; and
3. *Action*: encouragement to take action to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses.

Outcomes

The broad goal of the Commission's human rights education program is to develop in students an awareness of their human rights and responsibilities as members of the community in which they live.

A central aim is to assist young people in their development as informed, active citizens and to encourage values of tolerance, respect and empathy.

Content

Each human rights education module developed by the Commission is linked to the curriculum framework that exists in each state and territory. These curriculum links are clearly outlined in the supporting documentation of each module.

Links have been established to subjects across a range of Key Learning Areas, including:

- Studies of Society and Environment (especially subjects such as History, Aboriginal Studies, Australian Studies, Civics and Citizenship);
- English;
- The Arts.

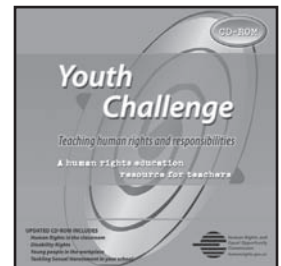
The education modules also include detailed teaching notes and resources to help teachers deliver an effective teaching and learning program on human rights.

They also provide significant flexibility in how they are delivered – teachers can incorporate individual activities into an existing program or teach the module as a whole.

Resources

The Commission has developed a range of human rights education resources, which focus on issues included in the Commission’s area of statutory responsibility. These include:

- **Youth Challenge: Teaching Human Rights and Responsibilities**



The Youth Challenge program comprises four units of study:

- ◇ *Human Rights in the Classroom* provides an accessible overview of human rights: what they are, how they have developed and where they apply.
- ◇ *Disability Discrimination – But what about Doug’s rights?* explores the issue of how competing rights can be resolved in a school community environment.
- ◇ *Young People in the Workforce* examines issues of race and sex discrimination, as well as the legal rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in Australia.
- ◇ *Tackling Sexual Harassment* addresses the issue of sexual harassment and how students can identify and address the issue, regardless of whether it happens to them or another student.

- **Bringing Them Home**

This education module introduces students and teachers to some of the key issues in the Commission’s Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. It gives students the opportunity to research issues and engage in debate in an informed way.

- ***Face the Facts: Questions and Answers about Refugees, Migrants and Indigenous People***

This education module provides teaching notes, student activities and worksheets, plus a range of recommended online resources and further reading, to research, analyse and debate the issues facing different groups in Australian society.



- ***Paid Maternity Leave: Activities on Gender Equality in the Workplace***

This education module draws on comprehension and oral/written composition skills to develop an understanding of gender and the workforce. It includes a fact sheet, a case study, teaching notes, structured activities and a student interview with the Commissioner.

In addition, the Commission's website features links to a comprehensive collection of national and international human rights education resources.

Electronic mailing lists

The Commission maintains ongoing communication with teachers and education bodies through an electronic mailing list. The Commission provides regular updates about:

- the most recent set of human rights education activities;
- reviews and links to human rights education resources;
- reviews of particular sections of the Commission's website which are useful for educators;
- upcoming human rights education events.

Delivery

The modules are delivered direct to teachers via the Commission website at www.humanrights.gov.au/info_for_teachers.

The Commission also advertises in teacher magazines and other education press to let teachers know about the resources. The Commission sends CD-Roms and other hard copy education materials to all schools together with order forms. All of these resources are provided free of charge.

Information for Students Webpage

The new human rights webpage for secondary students was launched in Sydney by Federal Attorney-General, the Hon. Philip Ruddock MP, and Commission President, the Hon. John von Doussa QC on 24 February 2006.

Information for Students is an online education resource for secondary school students to help them gain an awareness and understanding of human rights; their origin and history, the development of international human rights norms and contemporary human rights issues in Australia.

It is a multi-layered website that draws students through a range of human rights issues. It includes a plain English guide to what human rights are; common questions and answers on human rights; an explanation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and more detailed information on issues such as Indigenous social justice, 'stolen children', refugees and asylum seekers, children in immigration detention, sexual harassment and discrimination; and human rights in other countries.



Information for Students is also linked to other areas of the Commission's website that may interest students including:

- *Human Writes* essay competition and the national youth dialogue
- *Youth Challenge* modules
- *Voices of Australia*
- *The Face the Facts* publication
- *Bringing them home* module
- *Information for Employers* kit

The site can be found at www.humanrights.gov.au/info_for_students/index.html

Human Rights Explained

This is an online resource for Tertiary students. It was first published in 1998 and remains one of the Commission's most accessed sections.

Usage of Online Education Resources

The Commission's online human rights education resources are widely used by educators, both nationally and internationally. During 2005–06, the resources received 909,023 page views. This is an increase of 32 percent on usage of the online education resources since the previous financial year.

Human Rights Education Resource	Page views
Youth Challenge Education Module	112 186
Bringing them home Education Module	194 754
Information for Teachers	167 356
Information for Students	78 460
Face the Facts Education Module	56 410
Face the Facts publication	101 340
Human Rights Explained	47 572
A last resort? Teaching Resources	9 604
A last resort? Summary Guide	27 343
Celebrate Human Rights Day	5 262
Paid Maternity Leave – Gender and the Workplace Education Module	25 643
Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence Education Resources	22 814
SHOT! Photo Competition	40 649
Spirit of Reconciliation Poster Competition	3 589
Young People and Human Rights Competitions	16 041

Commission publications

In addition to all Commission publications being made available on the Commission’s website, around 118 000 publications were dispatched in hard copy format during 2005–06.

The most popular publications were *Face the Facts*, *Voices of Australia* (magazine and CD), *Good Practice*, *Good Business* CD, *Age Discrimination* brochure and *The Complaint Guide*.

A list of publications released during 2005–06 can be found at Appendix 2 of this Report.

2005 Human Rights Medal and Awards

The Human Rights Medal and Awards were established in 1987 to recognise individuals and organisations that have made a significant contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and equal opportunity in Australia.



The 2005 Medal and Awards presentation ceremony was held on 9 December 2005 at a luncheon at the Sheraton on the Park hotel in Sydney. The Human Rights Day address was delivered by Commission President, the Hon. John von Doussa QC, and Julie McCrossin was the MC.

A field of quality entries in the seven categories – Law, Community (Individual and Organisation), Arts Non-Fiction, Print Media, Television, Radio and the Human Rights Medal – showcased the tireless work undertaken by a range of individuals and organisations in the fields of disability and Indigenous rights, race discrimination, refugees and asylum seekers, gay rights, legal advocacy, young people, migration, law reform, rights for sex workers, child abuse and a range of community work.



The Commission is very grateful for the services of the judging panels who gave their time and expertise. The 2005 judges were: Ms Angela Bates, Justice Virginia Bell, Mr Barry Cheadle, Mr Maurice Corcoran AO, Mr Nicholas Cowdery QC, Ms Eva Cox AO, Prof Ann Curthoys, Ms Sue Dunlevy, Ms Merinda Epstein, Mr Dick Estens, Ms Deborah Kilroy, Mr Steve Larkin, Ms Debbie Lee, Mr Peter Mares, Ms Debbie Mortimer SC, Mr John Murray, Dr Klaus Neumann, Ms Suzanne Smith, Mr Mike Steketee, Mr Ron Sutton.

The winners can be found below. Further details can be found on the Commission's website at: www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/2005.html.

Human Rights Medal



The Human Rights Medal is awarded to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of human rights in Australia.

Winner: Kevin Cocks

Kevin Cocks, a long-time advocate for social justice and disability rights, was described by the judges as an articulate advocate for human rights and the absolute epitome of the quiet achiever.

He has been a member of Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) since its inception in 1988 and its Director since 1998. He has shown a great capacity to bridge the gap between government, the private sector and people with a disability.

His work ranged across many areas – from building access, transport, consumer health, universal housing design and the criminal justice system, to exposing abuse and neglect of people with a disability and education about Indigenous people with a disability.



2005 Law Council President John North (left) presents the law category award to Kristen Hilton (middle) and Paula O'Brien on behalf of PILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic

Law Award – sponsored by the Law Council of Australia

Winner: PILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic

PILCH (Public Interest Law Clearing House) Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic, established in 2001, provides free legal assistance to and advocacy on behalf of people who are homeless. It has succeeded in promoting the human rights of homeless people, reducing the degree to which homeless people are marginalised and providing sustainable pathways out of homelessness by addressing the underlying causes. The clinic also conducts research and legal advocacy on behalf of homeless people, training and community consultation.

Community Award – sponsored by SBS Radio

Community Award (Organisation) Winner: ChilOut

The group of middle Australia mums and dads that formed in 2001 after seeing the plight of a six-year-old Iranian boy in immigration detention demonstrated the remarkable power of committed individuals to achieve change. They showed the faces of children behind razor wire and brought the suffering of those children into Australian living rooms.

The judges credited ChilOut for their relentless campaign and for their contribution in pressuring the federal government to remove children from immigration detention.

Community Award (Individual) Winner: David Vadiveloo

David Vadiveloo is an internationally acclaimed filmmaker who has been a human rights lawyer, trainer and adviser.

He works at the grass roots level assisting Indigenous communities to communicate their issues to the global stage. The judges said he was motivated by love for

his work, the communities and individuals who lived there. He created the landmark ABC children's television and interactive series UsMob; his nationally and internationally recognised documentaries and docu-dramas include episodes for the SBS series *Tales from a Suitcase*, *Trespass*, *Beyond Sorry* and *Bush Bikes*.

Arts Non-fiction Award

Winner: Disability in Australia: Exposing a Social Apartheid by Associate Professor Christopher Newell and Dr Gerard Goggin

Disability in Australia explores a hidden blight in society – the ways in which the routine, daily and oppressive treatment of people with disabilities denies them dignity. It uses the everyday, untold experiences of life of people with disabilities to make a powerful and persuasive argument about social apartheid. The judges described the book as 'provocative, well-written and informative'. They said it combined the qualities of a passionate manifesto and a cool academic investigation.

Television Award

Winner: Vivian Solon, Lateline, ABC Television, produced by Margot O'Neill, Tom Iggulden, Hamish Fitzsimmons, Lisa Millar and Tony Jones

The award was given for a series of news-breaking stories by the Lateline program which unravelled the tragedy of Australian mother of two, Vivian Solon, who was wrongly deported to the Philippines more than four years ago.

It highlighted the systemic incompetence and negligence inside the Immigration Department and was described by the judges as an outstanding piece of investigative journalism that led to significant changes in government policy.

Radio Award

Winner: Locked in with Friends, Cath Dwyer, Street Stories, ABC Radio National

The radio documentary was about a young man, Chris Nolan, who lives in an aged care nursing home and the family and friends who support him.

When Nolan was 28 years old he suffered a hypoxic brain injury which left him in a 'locked in' state – unable to speak, see or move much, but he could still hear and understand. The program dealt with the profound effects of his injury – on him and those around him. It was described by the judges as an incredibly moving, challenging and brilliant piece of radio.

Print Media Award

Winner: "Mystery detained woman an Australian", Andra Jackson, The Age

The series of stories resulted in the identification of Cornelia Rau, a mentally ill woman who was unlawfully detained as a suspected illegal immigrant.

Cornelia Rau's unlawful detention captured the attention of the Australian public and had a substantial impact on immigration detention. The stories prompted a federal government inquiry and changes to government policy.