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Network SA**

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SACOSS

South Australian Council
of Social Service



AUSTRALIAN
LAWYERS
FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS™

Media release

For immediate release **9 December 2022**

Over 150 organisations and individuals say it's time for a Human Rights Law for SA

A group of over 150 organisations and individuals have endorsed a [statement](#) calling for a parliamentary Inquiry into a Human Rights Act for South Australia. The statement - released to coincide with international Human Rights Day tomorrow - has been led by the South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS), the Rights Resource Network of South Australia (RRNSA) and Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR).

Ross Womersley, CEO of SACOSS said, “This statement represents a powerful, unified call from an incredibly diverse range of voices who value this state’s proud record of adopting socially progressive legislation. We believe it’s now time to consider the next chapter – a Human Rights Act that legally protects the dignity, security and interests of all South Australians.”

Sarah Moulds, RRNSA Convenor said, “The Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Queensland have already enshrined human rights in Acts of Parliament. These laws are returning dignity and power to everyday people, and helping government officials to make fair and caring decisions about things like access to services and policy development. For example, they have been used to protect women at risk of domestic violence, to ensure public housing is accessible for people with mobility issues, to prevent restrictive practises in aged care facilities, and to secure children access to education and healthcare services.

South Australia now has an opportunity to put in place similar laws to protect the wellbeing of everyone in our state. Holding a public inquiry into a human rights law for South Australia would give everyone in our state the chance to design a law that meets the needs of our many different communities. It would also send a message to our children and young people that we care about their future, and we’re prepared to do the hard work to create lasting social change.”

Natalie Wade, ALHR Chair of Disability Rights said, “In the absence of a Human Rights Act, the most vulnerable people in our community live without any legislated framework to directly or completely protect their rights and freedoms. Current South Australian laws and policies provided the backdrop to the confronting case of abuse and neglect against Anne-Marie Smith, a woman with disability and the significant number of incidents of persons with disabilities facing

legal and attitudinal barriers preventing access to education, healthcare, employment, justice or other services, are evidence of the consequences of inadequate human rights protections in our state.

Human rights must drive the work of our government and its agencies, from the development of laws and policies, through to the daily decision-making by government that directly impacts our quality of life. Every South Australian must be able to obtain affordable, accessible solutions for justice if their human rights are breached.

Ross Womersley concluded, “Our proposal for change reflects our desire to live in a society that strives for the values we hold most dear: justice, equality and a ‘fair go’ for all. This Human Rights Day, we invite every South Australian to join the conversation and we call upon the Government to lead a community-wide conversation by establishing a public inquiry into a Human Rights Act for South Australia.

Contact: Matt Mitchell, ALHR media manager 0431 980 365.

Please find attached to this email:

- [The full statement and a list of the endorsing organisations and individuals.](#)
- A [list of case studies](#) that evidence the benefits that Human Rights Acts are delivering in the ACT, Victoria and QLD.
- [The Designing a Human Rights Framework for South Australia Report](#) issued by the Rights Resource Network SA (RRNSA) in February 2022.