



HUMAN RIGHTS ACT FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA



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Parliamentary Committee Report Calls for Human Rights Law for SA!

A coalition of leading advocacy organisations has welcomed the SA Parliament's Social Development Committee's tabling of its report calling for the enactment of a Human Rights Act for South Australia. This legislation would secure basic rights and freedoms for all South Australians regardless of their background or belief, based on principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect.

The [Human Rights Act for SA](#) Campaign group (HRA4SA) – made up of the Rights Resource Network of South Australia, the South Australian Council of Social Service and Australian Lawyers for Human Rights – has welcomed the report's findings and its key recommendations that:

1. The Committee recommends that the Government consolidate the various rights and protections afforded to citizens in the many legislative instruments listed at p.14-20 into one comprehensive Human Rights Act.
2. The Committee recommends that the Government transition the Equal Opportunities Commission to a Human Rights Commission.
3. The Committee recommends that the Government conduct a comprehensive consultation with the South Australian Community on the model of Human Rights Act to be adopted.

This would bring South Australia into line with other states and territories around Australia where human rights have been enshrined in law for decades.

The report was tabled today by the Social Development Committee after a 16-month inquiry into the effectiveness of current laws and mechanisms for protecting human rights in South Australia. It heard from more than 130 organisations and individuals who shared stories about the loss of dignity, humiliation, discrimination, and barriers in access to justice experienced by their friends, family and loved ones. Their stories reveal significant gaps in the state's current legal protections that leave too many South Australians to fall through the cracks. More than 90% of the submissions received supported the enactment of a Human Rights Act.

The HRA4SA Campaign is now calling on the South Australian Government to respond to the Committee's recommendation by introducing a draft Human Rights Bill and commencing a YourSay consultation.

Sarah Moulds of the Rights Resource Network says: *As South Australians, we seek not just a new law, but action that will help build a society which government, parliament, the courts and the people feel proud of and respect. We want to help build a culture that makes us a truly civil society.*

South Australians have proposed better protections for their human rights, including their right to housing, the right to equal access to health care and education – these rights, amongst others, must be properly recognised in the new Act.

Kerry Weste, of Australian Lawyers for Human Rights says: *A Human Rights Act for SA would finally give on-the-ground, local meaning to the internationally recognised human rights our*

country has committed to upholding for everyone, no matter who they are or where they live. It would reflect a society that strives for the values we hold most dear - justice, equality and a 'fair go' for all.

Human Rights Acts have already been passed in the Australian Capital Territory (2004), Victoria (2006) and Queensland (2019). Everyday these laws are benefitting people in concrete ways in relation to issues like housing, education, access to healthcare and much more. It's time for the South Australian Government to ensure that people in this state receive at least the same level of protection for their human rights.

Ross Womersley, CEO of SACOSS says: *Human rights should be at the heart of the work of our government and its agencies, from the development of laws and policies, through to smaller everyday decision-making that can so profoundly impact people's everyday lives. Every South Australian should be able to access affordable, simple solutions for justice if their human rights are breached. The announcement of these positive recommendations is very encouraging and welcomed.*

Arif Hussein of the Human Rights Law Centre said: *Human rights, fairness and equality should be at the heart of all government decision making, we welcome the recommendation for a South Australian Human Rights Act which would ensure human rights are protected and safeguarded for everyone in South Australia. We've already seen how human rights laws in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT have made a difference to people's lives – from overturning unjust eviction notices, safeguarding access to medical treatment, and stopping children from being locked up in cruel conditions. People in South Australia deserve to have these rights protected too.*

Dr Alice Clark of Shelter SA, said: *Australia is a signatory to various human rights treaties that include the right to an adequate standard of living, food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. A Human Rights Act would help us to secure these rights and take significant steps forward in assuring the dignity and quality of life of South Australians.*

Human rights protection was also identified as a top priority by outgoing South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly in her April 2025 report **Missing Out** where she says: *South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly says: "Putting a strong human rights framework in place will improve the realisation of children's rights throughout South Australia and raise the responsibility of governments to ensure all children and young people have what they need. Not having a Human Rights Act contributes to children and young people being overlooked and becoming and remaining invisible.*

The Committee's report is available [here](#)

[Join the campaign for a Human Rights Act for SA today!](#)

Briefing document on submissions to the Inquiry is attached below

Media Contacts:

Dr Sarah Moulds, UniSA and Director of Rights Resource Network SA: 0401132544

Batley Broom, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, Communications Manager: 0488280796

Ross Womersley, CEO, South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS): 0418 805 426

Chandi Bates, Communications Manager, Human Rights Law Centre: 0430 277 254