

Women's Rights Fact Sheet

» 5 minutes is all it takes

To learn more about reporting a breach of human rights

Reporting a breach of human rights

Human rights protect everyone from unjust and inhumane treatment. If a person feels their rights have been breached they can, if safe and appropriate to do so, raise their concerns directly with those responsible, for example an employer. People can also raise human rights issues and make complaints to bodies like the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, State and Territory human rights agencies or an appropriate Ombudsman.

The Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission (HREOC) is an independent third party which investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches. The complaint process is **simple, free** and **flexible**.

The Commission can investigate complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying based on a person's:

- » **Sex:** including pregnancy, marital status, family responsibilities and sexual harassment
- » **Disability:** including temporary and permanent disabilities; physical, intellectual, sensory, psychiatric disabilities, diseases or illnesses; medical conditions; work related injuries; past, present and future disabilities; and association with a person with a disability
- » **Race:** including colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, immigrant status and racial hatred
- » **Age:** including young people and older people
- » **Employment:** sexual preference, criminal record, trade union activity, political opinion, religion or social origin

The Commission can also investigate complaints about alleged breaches of human rights against the Commonwealth and its agencies.

HEREOC's Complaint Information Service

Many complaints begin with a phone call to HREOC's Complaints Information Service. This is an important

first step in determining whether or not a complaint is covered by the law and identifying the most appropriate agency to direct the complaint to. HREOC staff can make referrals to other agencies if appropriate.

State and Territory human rights agencies

Each state and territory has a human rights agency that can also receive complaints about human rights breaches.

- » Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales
- » Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- » Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland
- » Equal Opportunity Commission Western Australia
- » Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia
- » Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Tasmania
- » Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission
- » Australian Capital Territory Human Rights Commission

Information and advice about discrimination and human rights breaches can also be obtained by contacting a community legal service.

Women who have experienced violence

It can be a difficult decision to report an act of violence to the police. Some women choose not to report or may not report straight away for reasons important to them. Women can walk into a police station or make contact with police over the phone and ask to report a crime. As well as assisting with taking statements police can provide information and referrals to services which can offer further assistance such as counselling and legal support.

Most State Governments in Australia have a government assistance scheme for victims of crime. In Queensland women who have been injured as a result of an act of violence may be eligible for financial assistance as outlined in the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009*. For further information women can contact Victim Assist Queensland.