



Media Release

Thursday 22nd April 2010

Not acting on human rights an opportunity wasted

Women's Health Victoria is disappointed that Australia will remain the only Western democracy without a human rights act, as the Government today failed to establish a Human Rights act.

This decision is despite the key recommendation of the National Human Rights Committee, with the Government proposing instead a Human Rights Framework with far less powers and abilities.

Women's Health Victoria Executive Director Marilyn Beaumont said that violations of human rights occur every day in Australia, and that it was a wasted opportunity to enshrine human rights in law at a federal level.

"WHV believes that economic, social and cultural rights are particularly important in making a difference to the lives of everyday Australians, and the framework does not have the depth or legislative capacity to deliver," said Ms Beaumont.

"The rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged women will not be properly protected by the proposed human rights framework.

"The Government's Human Rights Framework appears to change very little in terms of Australia's existing obligations.

"How can human rights education, public sector reform and the review of existing legislation and policy have any real teeth without a human rights act to back it up?

"Concerns about a human rights act are not substantiated. Human rights legislation has been enacted in Victoria and the ACT, so the precedent has been set and there is widespread support for a Federal human rights act.

"WHV looks forward to the review in 2014 to allow the opportunity to debate and act for the good of human rights in Australia once more," said Ms Beaumont.

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