

A Human Rights Act for Queensland

How could a Human Rights Act assist people living in rural, regional and remote areas in Queensland?

A Human Rights Act will help to create a fair, just and equal society for everyone. When human rights are protected by law they help to ensure that we are all treated fairly, and with dignity, equality and respect.

Human rights protection will also have relevance for particular groups of people – including people living in rural, regional and remote areas of Queensland.

This factsheet explains how a Human Rights Act could improve things for Queenslanders in rural, regional and remote areas.

Which rights?

Regardless of where they live, Queenslanders should have their human rights protected.

Queenslanders living in rural, regional and remote areas often find it hard to enjoy their human rights because of their location. Their location may impact their enjoyment of:

- The right to education (protected in the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- The right to the highest attainable standard of health (protected in the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- The right to an adequate standard of living (protected in the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- The right to vote (protected in the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

In order for the rights contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to be enforceable in Queensland they need to be protected in law – for example in a Human Rights Act for Queensland.

Rights in action

Case study

During the initial stages of the Bushfires Royal Commission all applications made by victims for permission to appear were denied. Advocates argued that the “right to life” in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities brings with it the need for a proper investigation when people have died, and that the families of victims had a right to be part of that process. They also said that the “right to life” was relevant when looking at what public services could do better in the future. Following this advocacy victims were granted permission to appear before the Royal Commission to tell their stories.

Source: Federation of Community Legal Centres, Victoria, Strengthening Victoria’s Human Rights Charter, Submission to the Four Year Review June 2011.