



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General

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BRUMBY GOVERNMENT TAKES THE LEAD ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been a resounding success and provides a proven model for consideration by the Federal Government's charter consultation committee.

Opening the Victorian Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) Conference, Deputy Premier and Attorney-General Rob Hulls said Victoria's submission to the national consultation would highlight the success of Victoria's charter.

"Our Charter has been in full operation for a year and I'm proud to claim it a resounding success," Mr Hulls said.

"Since Victoria's Charter was introduced more than a year ago we have frequently seen human rights in action, redressing disadvantage and improving the lives of ordinary Victorians in particular some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

"Not only is the human rights dialogue permeating all levels of Government, there has been a change in culture so that when laws are developed, decisions made or services delivered, they are done with the human rights and responsibilities of every Victorian in mind.

"I hope that by embedding human rights within our legislation, we act as an inspiration to other governments around the country and pave the way for a Federal Charter."

Mr Hulls said the Government's submission would recommend a Federal Charter based on the Victorian model of open dialogue between the Parliament, courts and the community.

"We will be explaining that the 20 rights set out in the Victorian Charter act as a checklist to protect all members of the community from discrimination, disadvantage or exclusion," he said.

Mr Hulls said there were practical examples of the Charter making a difference, including young people with acquired brain injuries being allowed to remain in their chosen accommodation, a pregnant single mother with two children not being evicted from public housing, an involuntary mental health patient gaining access to medical treatment for a liver condition, and a Primary School using Charter considerations as a guideline for its redevelopment.

"We have been talking for some time about the concept of 'Respect' in Victoria," Mr Hulls said.

"Victoria's Charter is simply a demonstration of the respect a Government should afford its citizens – a measure of the value it places on each and every one and the attendant responsibilities it expects in return."

The Brumby Government will make a public submission to the National Human Rights Consultation by June 15, 2009. Further information is available at the Consultation website www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au

The VEOHRC Conference includes a program of talks by respected human rights advocates, panel discussions and sessions on protecting human rights. Further information is available at the Commission website www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/conference/default.asp.

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