



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

**PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR DISABILITIES
THE HON BILL SHORTEN MP**

**PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS
THE HON LAURIE FERGUSON MP**

NEWS RELEASE

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APPOINTMENT OF DISABILITY AND RACE DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONERS

Attorney-General Robert McClelland has today announced two substantive appointments to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. These appointments were welcomed by Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities Bill Shorten and Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs Laurie Ferguson.

Mr Graeme Innes AM has been appointed Disability Discrimination Commissioner and Mr Tom Calma has been appointed as Race Discrimination Commissioner.

Since 1997, the former Government refused to fill these positions – instead appointing acting Commissioners while they unsuccessfully tried to enact legislation to weaken the independence of the Commission.

“It is clearly unacceptable to have acting appointments for periods exceeding 10 years,” Mr McClelland said.

“Both Commissioners have made a significant contribution to the public debate on disability and race discrimination and have enhanced the Commission’s role in advancing and protecting human rights in Australia.”

Mr Innes is the current Human Rights Commissioner and has acted as Disability Discrimination Commissioner since December 2005. Mr Calma is the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and has acted as the Race Discrimination Commissioner since July 2004.

"Mr Innes is an extremely effective representative of the disability sector, campaigning for equal treatment and access for people with disabilities," Mr Shorten said.

“Mr Calma is a strong advocate of all Australians being treated equally, regardless of their background,” Mr Ferguson said.

The Rudd Government will work with the Commission on options for its long-term structure to ensure that it can continue its important role in promoting human rights in Australia.

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