

# National Human Rights Consultation Submission

AGWW-7RK3SF

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**Submission Text:**

There are 5 main points I would like considered:

1. I think the biggest social issue of our day is how multiculturalism works in Australia. The promotion of the benefits of cultural diversity and the need for respect to create peace needs to be an integral part of our national education system.
2. The NT intervention: while everyone accepts there are issues in many communities, I thought we had now learned, as a civilised society, that no sustainable outcomes are possible when basic human rights are denied. The fact that we have violated the Racial Discrimination Act (internationally and nationally) is appalling!
3. One of my biggest issues is around remedying the infringement of human rights. Currently in Tasmania, I am unable to raise complaints or look to remedy systemic or individual discrimination if it doesn't occur directly to me. For example, approx 5 years ago I was deeply offended by an advert on television by an Adelaide Christian Group, stating that gay people should not be allowed to adopt or foster children. I lodged a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Commission in Tas. My complaint could not be followed through because I am heterosexual. I was offended that my sexuality needed to be questioned and didn't see how it was relevant to the impact of this discrimination on me and the wider community. I currently work with young people coming here as refugees. If i am walking down the street and a young person I am with is racially vilified, I have no recourse. Racism in the community affects me whatever ethnicity I am. When raising similar issues with Police, I was told that we must get the victims to lodge complaints. Asking the most vulnerable in our society to be responsible for addressing issues in the broader host society is unfair and unrealistic.
4. The International Convention states that there is the right to maintain your culture. What does this mean? What i know of culture is that it is constantly evolving. Often, when I am told i must respect another's culture, it is where someone's human right's are being infringed and defended under the notion of "culture".
5. We need a National Human Rights Act. I believe we need a clarification of our Human Rights in the Constitution but know this review is not looking at this. At least we need the National Act to embed Human Rights in our policies and practices and follow other places which have benefitted hugely by adopting such an act.