



Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM President

SIXTH YEAR OF TERM

‘Good relationships and open doors are absolutely crucial for us to be able to play the role of trusted adviser to its fullest—to be the devil’s advocate and at times to be the “devil’s blowtorch”, you need to have a respected seat at the table.’

TERM GOALS

- **Advance** the Commission’s relationship with key stakeholders including the Commonwealth Parliament.
- **Enhance** community understanding of human rights and building an Australian culture of rights-mindedness.
- **Lead** the internal and external governance of the Commission effectively.
- **Secure** financial sustainability for the Commission.
- **Foster** and lead a positive and collegiate Commission and organisational culture.
- **Progress** the role and leadership of the Commission as an independent statutory agency and as Australia’s National Human Rights Institution.

PRINCIPLES / APPROACH

- Opening the conversation and generating forward momentum in discussing human rights challenges and solutions.
- Leading the development of a national reform agenda for human rights.
- Ensuring integrity in the Commission’s financial management and governance.
- Ensuring and promoting the Commission’s reputation for human rights expertise, evidence and independence.
- Building understanding through thematically linked speeches and articles.
- Celebrating human rights achievements across the community.



President Croucher speaking at the launch of 2021 program for the Women Lawyers Association of NSW, February 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES: 2022–23 WORKPLAN

President Croucher leads these programs.

<p>Integrity in governance and financial management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the implementation of governance reforms to the Commission to maximise the strategic leadership of the Commission’s statutory officers and ensure transparency and accountability for decision making. • Embedding new systems and practices across the organisation to ensure robust financial management. • Securing appropriate core funding support from Government to enable the Commission to perform its statutory mandates, including to address backlogs in complaint handling and appropriately support statutory officers in performing their functions.
<p>Free and equal in dignity and rights: An Australian conversation on human rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategic multiyear initiative aims to lead discussion about how to build a system of human rights protection for 21st century Australia where the promotion of human rights is a shared endeavour – by government, business, the NGO sector, educators, service providers and the community at large. The initiative draws on the expertise and unites the work of all the Commission. • This is the final year of the project and the focus will be delivery of the Final Report for tabling, which brings together the learning and recommendations from previous work, including thematic technical and general symposiums, submissions and consultative processes and Position Papers on discrimination law reform and human rights reforms. The project recommendations relate to the core work of the Commission and will form the basis of ongoing advocacy.

<p>Investigation and Conciliation and National Information Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These services ensure all Australians can access free and accessible information, and investigation and conciliation services. They provide best practice alternative dispute resolution for complainants and respondents and focus on systemic outcomes that have far-reaching positive benefits for the Australian Community. • A major focus in 2022–23 is to identify pathways to address an unprecedented increase in complaint numbers and consequent backlog in complaints.
<p>Human rights education and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program supports the Commission’s statutory function to ‘promote understanding and acceptance and the public discussion of human rights in Australia’. The program strategically targets audiences and sectors in its aim to ‘build a universal culture of human rights’. • This year’s program will focus on fee for service training to support organisations to comply with legal obligations and promote best practice human rights-based approaches.
<p>Human rights technical co-operation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through funding from Australia’s Aid Program, this year’s programs with other countries include: developing blended education models in schools and supporting capacity and awareness in the private sector in Vietnam through our Vietnam Human Rights Education partnership; strengthening processes and protection in Lao People’s Democratic Republic through engagement with whole-of-government and civil society through the LAO PDR – Australia Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program; and continued support of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.
<p>International engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an ‘A status’ National Human Rights Institution we have a formal role in the United Nations system. In partnership with other NHRIs we work to advance human rights in our region and globally. This year the President concludes her role as Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (after the maximum two terms of two years each), one of the four regional networks in the Global Alliance of NHRIs. She will continue to represent the Commission through the APF, the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the international network, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. • A major focus of the year is ensuring the Commission retains its ‘A status’ as a national human rights institution, by advocating for legislative reforms to the Commission relating to the process for the appointment and selection of Commissioners and sustainable core funding.
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission regularly operates through partnerships and collaborations with government, business, the non-government sector and internationally. Partnerships increase our capability through shared skills and resources and create a collective ability to achieve outcomes greater than the individuals or organisations acting alone. It is a central feature of how we work. • The Commission will continue to collaborate with a wide range of partners to achieve our objectives, consistent with our legislative functions and independence. This year’s program will place a strategic focus on advancing human rights in sport and where appropriate, undertaking cultural reviews of diverse organisations.
<p>Human rights scrutiny</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program aims to improve human rights protections in current and proposed legislation and includes an ongoing relationship with the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. The work involves the monitoring of federal legislative and inquiry processes, identifying strategic opportunities for engagement by the Commission, including evidence-based submissions to inquiries.