

Review Into Australia's Human Rights Framework

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The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP

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I have asked the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to conduct a review of Australia's Human Rights Framework.

Australia's Human Rights Framework was launched in 2010.

The key focus of the Framework was ensuring that education and information about human rights is readily available to everyone in the Australian community. This included the establishment of the Joint Committee on Human Rights and the requirement that each Bill be accompanied by a Statement of Compatibility with Australia's international human rights obligations.

This inquiry is an opportunity to look at whether these and other components of the Framework remain fit for purpose, or if improvements can be made.

When it was launched, the Human Rights Framework included a commitment by the then-government to review it in 2014 to assess its effectiveness. Following the change of government at the 2013 election, that review was never undertaken. While elements of the Framework have been implemented (in whole or in part), a review is now almost ten years overdue.

The Government believes that the enhancement of human rights should be done in a way that unites, rather than divides, our community.

I look forward to receiving the Committee's report in 2024. In the meantime, the Government will remain focused on delivering on its key election commitments when it comes to protecting and enhancing human rights.

In particular, the Government is committed to introducing legislation to:

- prevent discrimination against people of faith, including anti-vilification protections;
- act to protect all students from discrimination on any grounds; and
- protect teachers from discrimination at work, while maintaining the right of religious schools to preference people of their faith in the selection of staff.