



WESTERN AUSTRALIA FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

MEMBERSHIP FACTSHEET

1. What is WA4HRA?

Western Australia for a Human Rights Act (**WA4HRA**) is a strong alliance of organisations and individuals campaigning to ensure that the human rights of Western Australians are protected by law.

In Western Australia, we don't have a formal protection for our human rights. The overarching objective of the WA4HRA Coalition is to work collaboratively to secure a commitment from the WA Government to introduce a Human Rights Act in Western Australia.

Our campaign activities include:

1. Engaging in strategic political advocacy with elected representatives about the need for, and benefits of, a WA Human Rights Act.
2. Raising community awareness of human rights and fostering community dialogue about the benefits of a Human Rights Act for Western Australians.
3. Engaging in public debate, including through the media, about the need for, and benefits of, a WA Human Rights Act.

WA4HRA is auspiced by Australian Lawyers for Human Rights and is led by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from some of our Coalition Members and individual experts.

Our Coalition Members include peak bodies, community service providers, university bodies and organisations who believe in the need for - and benefits of - better human rights protections for all Western Australians. A full list of our Coalition Members can be found on the WA4HRA website: <https://www.wa4hra.com.au/about>

2. Why is a Human Rights Act important?

Protecting human rights is a way of ensuring everyone is treated fairly, equally, and with dignity and respect.

In Western Australia, we don't have formal protection for our human rights. This means that many of the basic rights that Western Australians take for granted, such as the right to equality before the law, the right to freedom of association and rights to health and education are not adequately protected by existing legislation.

Although Australia is a party to many international human rights treaties, this does not mean those rights are enforceable in our domestic legal system. A Human Rights Act will make WA a more modern, fair and responsive state where everyone's rights are respected, protected and promoted. This in turn improves the welfare of the whole community, all under one piece of legislation.

This movement is gathering momentum across all of Australia. Human Rights Acts have already been introduced in three other Australian jurisdictions – Victoria, Queensland and the ACT – and other states are also running campaigns to introduce their own Human Rights Acts.

People living in places where human rights legislation already exists have used it to improve their lives in many different contexts. For example, people with disabilities and Aboriginal people have relied on these laws to challenge unfair evictions from social housing and parents have been able to protect the rights of their children to attend day care and school. Case studies showing how Human Rights Acts are improving the lives of Australians can be found on the WA4HRA website at <https://www.wa4hra.com.au/resources> and also at the '101 Cases of Human Rights Charters Make Lives Better' website <https://charterofrights.org.au/101-cases>

3. What would the legislation include?

Modelled on similar legislation in other Australian jurisdictions, we are calling for legislation that includes:

1. Protection of the fundamental human rights that Australia has agreed to uphold under core international human rights conventions, including civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.
2. A strong mechanism for parliamentary scrutiny of legislation for compliance with the Human Rights Act.
3. A requirement that public authorities must act consistently with human rights and consider human rights when making decisions.

4. A requirement that state courts must interpret legislation consistently with human rights if possible to do so, and may issue declarations of incompatibility with the Human Rights Act.
5. Meaningful and accessible remedies for individuals seeking redress for violations of their human rights.

4. Why should I become a member of WA4HRA?

Becoming a member of WA4HRA is a small action with a very big impact.

By adding your voice and your influence to our movement, you will be publicly signalling your commitment to equality, dignity and justice for all Western Australians.

You will be joining a coalition of highly respected community service organisations, peak bodies and individuals dedicated to protecting some of the most vulnerable people in our state.

We know that campaigns like ours can make a difference and have been instrumental in introducing human rights legislation in other jurisdictions. For example, the Human Rights for Queensland campaign was a driving force behind the passage of the 2019 Queensland Human Rights Act – legislation which has already had a tangible impact on the lives of many Queenslanders.

Importantly, as a Coalition Member you will also have the opportunity to contribute your expertise to help guide the future direction of the campaign. In doing so, you will take part in shaping what may be a historic piece of legislation for Western Australia.

5. What does being a member of WA4HRA involve?

Coalition Members agree to:

- publicly support and advocate for the introduction of a Human Rights Act in Western Australia
- allow their name and/or logo to be included on the campaign website and in campaign publications
- share Steering Committee approved campaign resources through their own networks where relevant to their organisation
- participate in coalition discussions and meetings, where possible, to help shape campaign priorities and direction
- help grow the coalition by encouraging other organisations and individuals to join the campaign
- make any public comments in their own name and through their own channels, rather than on behalf of the WA4HRA Coalition, unless appointed as an official WA4HRA spokesperson.

There is no fee for membership however Coalition Members are encouraged to contribute in-kind and financial resources to the campaign.

6. Who can become a member of WA4HRA?

Any organisation can apply to become a Coalition Member. All applications will be considered by our Steering Committee before approval.

Individuals can also support the campaign by signing up to our mailing list or joining our Steering Committee or working groups. If you are interested in supporting WA4HRA as an individual please contact us at wa4hra@gmail.com

7. How do I become a member of WA4HRA?

If you would like to join as a Coalition Member, please contact us at wa4hra@gmail.com. We will get back in touch as soon as possible to answer any questions you might have and provide you with a membership agreement form for you to complete.

You can withdraw your membership at any time by sending us a message in writing.