

# Human rights education and the Victorian Public Sector

## Centring human rights in the public sector

Since the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) came into force in 2007, the Commission has been developing the human rights capabilities of the Victorian public sector through our education and consultancy services.

Our range of services aims to make human rights part of the everyday business of government. We identify practical ways to support public authorities to build a culture of human rights in Victoria. Using collaborative and tailored approaches, we develop the capabilities of public authorities to properly consider and apply human rights in everyday decision-making and actions.

We are uniquely positioned to provide high-impact education as our services are guided and informed by evidence drawn from our functions and experience, including:

- authoritative and in-depth knowledge of human rights
- direct engagement with the community on human rights
- insights from our legal intervention in cases before courts and tribunals
- monitoring and reviews of human rights issues.

## Why build a human rights culture in Victoria?

Victoria was the first Australian state to enact a human rights law. By passing the Charter, the Victorian Parliament recognised that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. With these rights comes a responsibility for government to make human rights real for all people in Victoria. Public authorities are at the forefront of government efforts to embed a culture of human rights.

**“A government that lives and breathes human rights reminds us all that we live in a community that values the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom.”**

Kristen Hilton, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner

The Charter requires public authorities to act in a way that is compatible with human rights and to give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions.

These obligations provide public authorities with an effective framework for driving human rights cultural change. This contributes to better human rights outcomes across decision-making, risk management, project and policy development, complaint procedures, law making and service delivery.

## Helping public authorities understand Charter obligations during COVID-19

**The need for human rights capability has been in focus during the COVID-19 emergency. The Charter requires any restrictions on human rights to be justified, proportionate and necessary.**

During a state of emergency, restrictions should also be time bound, with safeguards for vulnerable communities whose rights are most impacted. Our education services support public authorities to understand human rights risks relating to the pandemic and to make decisions that are compliant with the Charter. The Charter was designed to see us through times of crisis and engaging early with education and support services will build capability when making urgent and critical decisions.

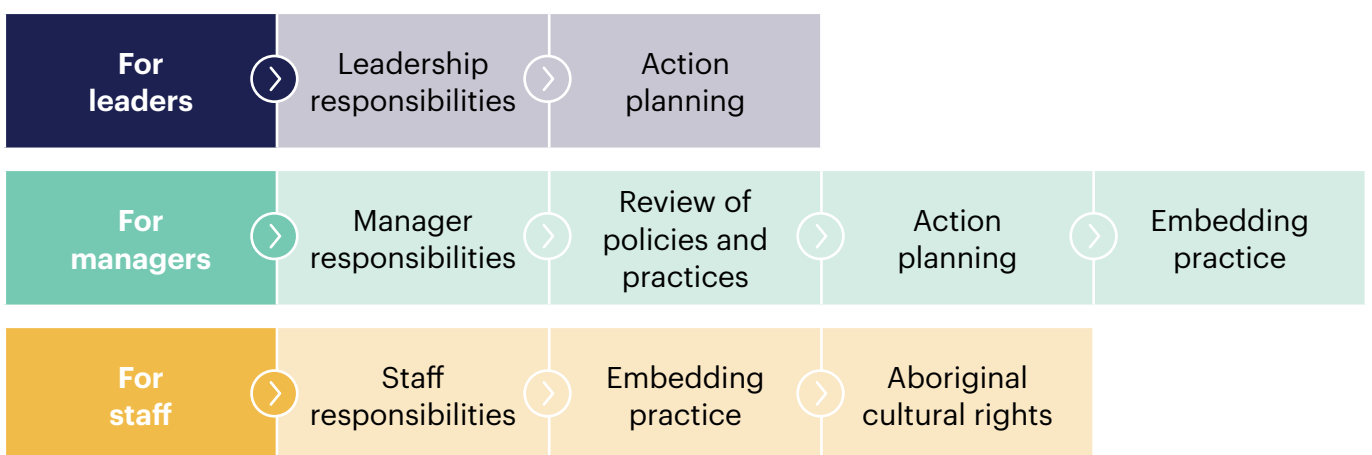
## Our Charter services

Our education services help public authorities meet their Charter obligations. We have a range of delivery options that can be tailored to individual workplaces. Our programs focus on:

Leadership responsibilities	Manager responsibilities	Staff responsibilities	Policies and practices
We support executive and leadership teams to understand their responsibilities under the Charter and identify ways to strengthen and embed leading practice, based on our Human rights culture indicator framework.	We equip managers with the expertise, skills and mindset to meet their Charter responsibilities and lead good human rights practice.	We work with public sector teams to build understanding of their human rights obligations and develop skills to apply the Charter in their day-to-day work.	We help organisations review their policies and practices with a view to strengthening their systems and processes to comply with the Charter.

Action planning	Embedding practice	Aboriginal cultural rights	COVID-19 and the Charter
We work with public authorities to identify actions to build a culture of human rights, meet their Charter obligations and improve services to the community.	We support public authorities to develop innovative and customised resources, systems and processes to embed and sustain good human rights practice.	We assist public authorities to build their understanding of Aboriginal cultural rights and how these rights are applied in their work.	We support public authorities to understand human rights risks relating to the pandemic and make Charter-compliant decisions.

## Example program pathways









## Contact us to discuss your needs

Please call us on 1300 292 153 or email [education@veohrc.vic.gov.au](mailto:education@veohrc.vic.gov.au). You can also find out more about our education and consultancy work at [humanrights.vic.gov.au/education.au](http://humanrights.vic.gov.au/education.au).

# A roadmap to good human rights practice in Victoria

Our Human rights culture indicator framework provides a roadmap for public authorities to embed human rights across their organisation. A human rights culture in Victoria requires action across these six pillars.

Influence	 Engaged leadership	 Attitudes and values of employees	 Transparency and accountability	 Community engagement and participation	 Operational capability – knowledge and resourcing	 Systems and processes
Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders demonstrate their commitment to human rights and the Charter both publicly and within their respective organisations.</li> <li>Discussions on human rights are included at leadership forums (including at business and branch planning forums).</li> <li>Executive performance review documents include metrics on human rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People feel safe to raise issues and call out problems.</li> <li>The organisation is genuinely diverse and inclusive and reflects the communities it serves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations encourage good human rights practice.</li> <li>The organisation knows what they have achieved and what still needs to be done to embed a positive human rights culture.</li> <li>The organisation understands and complies with human rights reporting mechanisms (for example by electing to complete the Commission's survey on human rights culture).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community participation has informed key work and feedback is regularly sought from the community.</li> <li>Improvements and interventions are made based on community feedback.</li> <li>Tools and information are available for the community about their human rights.</li> <li>The organisation has structured and effective processes to ensure accessibility.</li> <li>Complaint mechanisms are available and accessible to the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victorian public sector staff understand the Charter and how to apply it in their work.</li> <li>Relevant human rights days and achievements are articulated and celebrated.</li> <li>The organisation has dedicated resources (time and funding) to embed human rights.</li> <li>Champions or influencers of human rights are empowered and resourced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Charter is included in legal compliance frameworks.</li> <li>The organisation embeds human rights into key processes and tools.</li> <li>The organisation delivers available, accessible, adaptable, acceptable, inclusive and quality services.</li> </ul>