



National Human Rights Consultation Information Pack: *Preparing Your Written Submission*

The NSW Reconciliation Council has developed this Information Pack to assist you in preparing a submission to the National Human Rights Consultation Committee. You can use these resources to more effectively convey your position on human rights. We encourage supporters of reconciliation to make a submission and to emphasise the need for better protection of the rights of Indigenous people in Australia. Please use this Information Pack in conjunction with the NSWRC previous Information Pack: Participating in Community Consultations. This pack is focused on the submission writing process, the previous pack is full of resources that may help you with writing the content. The NSWRC and NSW ANTaR have also developed a Pro-forma Submission that can be downloaded from www.nswrecon.com. The closing date for written submissions is 15th June 2009.

Why should I write a submission?

The current Australian political and legal system does not adequately protect the rights of all Australians. The National Human Rights Consultation presents a “once in a generation opportunity” to influence and shape a future framework for improving the protection of human rights in Australia.

By writing a submission and providing your perspective, you will be making it clear to the Australian Government that you want better protection and promotion of human rights, now and for future generations. Numbers really matter in this national consultation process and every submission counts. The more people who write a submission, the more attention the government will pay to human rights, and the more likely it is that changes will be made to better protect human rights in domestic law.

How can I ensure my submission will make a difference?

To write a persuasive submission, you will need to be able to clearly state your position. You will need to consider the current limitations in the protection of your rights and the rights of other Australians.

The resources below are designed to help you communicate your views. A clear, concise, well-structured submission written in plain English will be more persuasive than a long, unstructured submission. The resources below will help you in structuring your submission.

Writing a Submission: A guideline on how to write clear submissions to government agencies
http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/download/govt_submission_ting.pdf

Writing Submissions to law reform bodies

www.humanrights.gov.au/letstalkaboutrights/workshops/NHRC_submission_writing_workshop_Session_2_FINAL.ppt

What should I include in my submission?

When preparing your submission, consider your personal experiences and knowledge. Think about how you can add value to the consultation by providing reflections on your own experiences and knowledge of situations when human rights have been violated in Australia. Including stories of your experiences and the experiences of others is an excellent way to illustrate your points, and will add a “human face” to the process and put facts and figures into context. After providing an example, you may like to explain how greater protection of human rights may have avoided these situations.

When writing up the case study or story, keep it short and to the point. Describe the experience and sequence of events. If detailed, summarise the context in a general background leading to the story. Include quotes where possible. Conclude the story in one or two sentences that make the point of the story and try to link it back to the relevant rights requiring better protection.

It is important that all participants convey their own concerns in the submission. However, in order to bring attention to the need for better protection of the rights of Indigenous Australians you may like to consider raising the following points:

- Protection of basic human rights through a Human Rights Act, will assist in ‘closing the gap’ in Indigenous and non-Indigenous life expectancy.
- A Human Rights Act is essential to ensure the protection of the well-being and dignity of Indigenous people in Australia.
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People should be recognised in an Australian Human Rights Act, particularly
 - the right to self-determination (which can include a guarantee of full, free and effective participation in all aspects of public life, particularly government decision-making)
 - the right to recognition and protection of traditional lands, territories and resources
 - the right to the enjoyment of culture and use and preservation of languages, and to not be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of culture.
- Indigenous peoples should be recognised in the preamble of the Human Rights Act.

The resources below will help you consider what you might like to include in your submission.

NSWRC Information Pack: Participating in Community Consultations

<http://www.nswrecon.com/National%20Human%20Rights%20Consultations%20Info%20Pack.pdf>

Australian Parliamentary Library Law Resource: Civil and Human Rights

<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/LAW/civlaw.htm>

Examples of public submissions already lodged with National Human Rights Consultation Committee

http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/nhrcc.nsf/Page/Public_submissions

NSWRC Pro-forma Submission:

www.nswrecon.com