

A person wearing a yellow cap, a dark t-shirt, and red shorts is walking on a large, layered rock formation. The rock is reddish-brown and has a textured, layered appearance. The person is walking from left to right. The background is a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are more rock formations and a sandy beach with some water. The text "Human rights in the community" is overlaid on the image in a white font on a red background.

Human rights in the community

Community education and training

The Human Rights Act gives the Commission functions to:

- promote an understanding and acceptance, and the public discussion, of human rights
- make information about human rights available to the community
- provide education about human rights and the Act.¹

This work is integral to achieving the Act's objectives of protecting and promoting human rights, building a culture in the public sector that respects human rights, and promoting a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights.²

Training for public entities

In addition to human rights complaint handling functions, the Commission provides education and training to government and functional public entities (as well as private and not-for-profit sectors), and in the financial year delivered 46 *Introduction to the Human Rights Act* sessions and 6 *Introduction to the Human Rights Act – train-the-trainer* sessions.

Sessions on the Human Rights Act were adapted for advocates and legal representatives, and in the financial year we delivered 4 sessions to community advocates and 6 sessions to legal advocates. Many sessions were tailored for the specific needs of workplaces or sectors and helped participants consider the application of the Act through scenarios relevant to their situation. Five webinars specifically designed for people working in the mental health sector and for mental health advocates on *Human rights in mental health* were delivered in 2021–22.

Face-to-face training is complemented by the Commission's online learning modules, which were the most popular way to receive training in the reporting period. The *Introduction to the Human Rights Act* module was completed by 2,142 people and 5,556 people completed the *Public entities and the Queensland Human Rights Act* module.

¹ *Human Rights Act 2019* s 61(d)–(f).

² *Human Rights Act 2019* s 3.

Human rights in child protection

A particular focus for the Commission this year has been child protection. This included the delivery of six tailored legal advocates sessions for practitioners from the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs and Legal Aid Queensland (five delivered during the financial year), a workshop at the Queensland Foster and Kinship Care Conference, an Introduction to the Human Rights Act tailored for the department, and an information booth at the department's Senior Practitioner forum.

More than 570 department staff accessed the Commission's standard online training *Public Entities and Human Rights Act* module, and the Commission is in the process of tailoring that module for the department with child safety and youth justice specific material.

The Commission was also involved with collaborations with parents, the department and the Family Inclusion Networks that led to the development and launch of the Charter of Rights for parents involved with the child protection system in Queensland on 1 June 2022.

Website

The Commission's website remained a key source of information for the community about their rights. In particular, the Commission provided frequently updated information about how the Human Rights Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act applied to topical issues, such as vaccination and mask-wearing in the context of the pandemic. Three of the top five most viewed pages this year were COVID-related and our 'Vaccination and your rights' page alone accounted for more than 8% of all website traffic.

Consultation and engagement

The Commission continues to facilitate consultation groups to contribute towards building a culture of human rights in the legal and academic sectors:

- Queensland Academics Human Rights Group: academics undertaking research and sharing information to support Queensland's developing human rights culture
- Queensland Human Rights Advocates Group: lawyers and advocates who work in discrimination and human rights law.

Human Rights Week

To celebrate Human Rights Week, culminating on 10 December 2021 with Human Rights Day, the Commission ran a campaign called 'Make equality your priority' focusing on the right to freedom from discrimination as one of the core foundations of human rights protections. Through this campaign, the Commission encouraged individuals and organisations to engage with and make submissions to the Review of Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act. The associated online materials were viewed over 27,000 times.

This year the Commission provided 4 free webinars for the community during Human Rights Week: 2 on *Introduction to the Human Rights Act* and 2 on *Introduction to the Anti-Discrimination Act*, and a total of 318 participants attended these sessions during the week.

As part of its Human Rights Week coverage, the Queensland Law Society's digital magazine, *Proctor*, published an overview of the operation of the Human Rights Act in 2020-21 written by one of the Commission's Principal Lawyers.