

**Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM, President, Australian Human Rights Commission**

Opening Statement

As the focus of this Committee is on budget matters, and as the Annual Report for the Commission and the Portfolio Budget Statements are published, they show that the Commission has indeed faced significant budget challenges, which came to a head last year.

Chair, before going to questions, I did want to warmly acknowledge the role of the Attorney-General and her Department in providing an equity injection of \$16 million to enable the Commission to meet its financial obligations this financial year. And the agreement of the Attorney and the Prime Minister to consider an appropriate level of ongoing annual funding in the MYEFO process. I also wish to acknowledge the support of Government for a range of specific project funding, which speaks to the value of an independent national human rights institution, both nationally and internationally, and also to the work of the individual Commissioners of the Commission.

The Commission is committed to continue working with the Attorney, with the Department and the Department of Finance to ensure we are adequately and reliably resourced to deliver our statutory obligations into the future.

By way of two closing observations, I would also warmly welcome the re-appointment of June Oscar as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner for another two years, to continue her key leadership in relation to Indigenous women and girls in her *Wiyi Yani U Thangani* project, women and girls.

And finally, as this is Senator Carr's final Estimates appearance, I would also like to wish you well on behalf of the Commission in the next steps in your career and thank you from a personal level for your probing questions over my fifteen years in this hearing context. Thank you, Senator Carr.

Thank you Chair. My colleagues and I are all present today on video link or in person and we welcome any questions that the Committee would like to put to us.