

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

**Senate Estimates Hearing, Tuesday 23 May 2023**

**Opening statement:**

As this will be the final appearance of three Commissioners, before the conclusion of their terms, I would like to include for the Hansard record a tribute to each of them of their contributions over their terms.

**For Commissioner Patterson:**

The Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO has been Age Discrimination Commissioner since 2016. During her term she has advocated tirelessly for the implementation of recommendations from the Australian Law Reform Commission's 2017 report 'Elder Abuse – A National Legal Response' and has played a pivotal role in increasing community awareness of elder abuse and available supports by encouraging the development of elder abuse training, delivering three elder abuse awareness campaigns and developing resources in 20 languages to raise awareness of the National Elder Abuse phone line. She has also been a leading voice in calling for enduring power of attorney law reform to prevent financial abuse. Her reports 'What's Age Got to Do with It' and 'Talking about My Generation' have provided deeper insights into ageism across the adult lifespan and she has encouraged intergenerational initiatives, such as 'The Centenarian Portrait Project for Teenagers', to dispel ageist myths and promote cross-generational cohesion. She has been active in promoting the value of older workers through her work on the Collaborative Partnership on Mature Age Employment, development of an older worker resource hub and partnership on two surveys providing insights into older worker employment. She has shone a light on the issue of older women at risk of homelessness and contributed to aged care reforms through the Council of Elders. Commissioner Patterson's term comes to an end in July 2023, I acknowledge and thank her for her contributions.

**For Commissioner Gauntlett**

Dr Ben Gauntlett has been Disability Discrimination Commissioner since May 2019 and he is leaving this role on 30 June to take up a position of Deputy Commissioner of the National Anti-Corruption Commission. Dr Gauntlett's expertise has been invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a disproportionate impact on people with disability. His leadership on the IncludeAbility project continues to create tangible positive employment outcomes for people with disability and their employers. The project lives on, with a suite of public resources supporting employers to create inclusive workplaces. Dr Gauntlett has made significant contributions to the rights of people with disability, for example through his advocacy on inclusive housing, and his leadership on

the National Disability Data Asset and Australia's Disability Strategy. I thank him for his work and wish him all the best in his new role.

### **For Commissioner Tan**

Chin Tan has been Race Discrimination Commissioner since October 2018 and his five year term concludes in October. During his term he led the design and development of the newest iteration of the *Racism. It Stops With Me* campaign, a national anti-racism public awareness campaign, which has placed the campaign within the broader national conversation about race and racism – including raising awareness about systemic racism and the ways it can operate. In the aftermath of the Christchurch terrorist attack, Commissioner Tan led the *Sharing the Stories of Australian Muslims* project. The project report shared with a broader audience, including policy makers, the priorities, concerns and important anti-racism work of Australian Muslim communities across the nation. During the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic the Commissioner advocated for improved national data collection about the prevalence and severity of racism and the need for comprehensive national data on racial equity including as it relates to health outcomes. He spoke up for the need for accessible and culturally appropriate information and responses to the challenges of the pandemic. Due to all these factors the Commission called for a National Anti-Racism Framework in March 2021. Commissioner Tan has led this work, consulting with experts, peak organisations and communities to outline national priorities and preferred approaches to developing such a framework. Commission funding has been secured from the Government to progress a framework and to support further public awareness and education initiatives under the RISWM campaign. This means the important human rights work begun under Commissioner Tan's leadership will continue. I acknowledge his central role in this important national priority setting and thank him for his commitment to progressing it.