

Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework

Valerio Daniel De Simoni Association Inc.

June 9, 2023

The Valerio Daniel De Simoni Association welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework.

The Valerio Daniel De Simoni Association (VDSA) is an Association focussing on helping refugees trying to settle in Australia. It has Charity status and is supported 100% by donations from its 140 members and the broader Australian community.

We write this submission because we agree with the Human Rights Commission's statement: "Everyone has the right to seek asylum and be free from persecution regardless of how or in what country they arrive. It is not illegal to seek asylum. This fundamental right is protected in International Law by the Universal declaration of Human Rights and Refugee Convention".

This submission will consider whether the Australian Parliament should enact a federal Human Rights Act, and if so, what elements it should include.

VDSA supports the legislation of a federal Human Rights Act, also known as a Human Rights Charter.

We support a Human Rights Act because many refugees we support are experiencing increasing levels of homelessness and destitution (for example, single mothers in community detention not knowing how to feed their children or pay for accommodation because SRSS has suddenly suspended their payments; not having government help they can rely only on Charitable Associations).

A Human Rights Act will help prevent human rights abuses because it will place human rights at the heart of decision-making by requiring governments to consider human rights when drafting laws, developing policies, delivering services, and making decisions.

Importantly, an Act will give people the power to take action if their rights are violated and seek reparations for violations.

Finally, a Human Rights Act will foster respect for human rights in Australia, so we can work toward a future where everyone, everywhere understands their rights, and the rights of others.

VDSA supports a legislated Human Rights Act like those in Victoria, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory, and support the position paper released by the Australian Human Rights Commission in March 2023.

An Act should include the human rights Australia has already promised to uphold under international law, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights under the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the rights of children and people with disabilities.

Without a Human Rights Act the Government of the day can act in contravention of the human rights of the people seeking asylum.

Recommendation: The inquiry recommends the Federal government legislate a Human Rights Act.

Yours sincerely,

Vittoria Pasquini

Vittoria Pasquini | President

