

ACT Human Rights Act Legal Network

This network (just getting started in February 2006) developed from discussion in a Human Rights Office Community Forum which identified the need for a practice group for lawyers and others interested in the practical application of the Human Rights Act in casework and advocacy. This network is supported by the ACT Human Rights Office (HRO) and the ACT Human Rights Act Research Project at ANU (<http://acthra.anu.edu.au>).

Aims

The aims of the network will include the following:

- Encouraging the use of the Human Rights Act by practitioners
- Developing and sharing expertise about the Human Rights Act, including through publicising human rights cases
- Creating links between community sector lawyers, academics and private practitioners with an interest in the Human Rights Act
- to be a conduit between ACT Human Rights Office and community /practitioners for training and exchange of information and ideas.
- Facilitating referrals of human rights cases to practitioners with an interest in the Human Rights Act
- Encouraging the identification and running of appropriate human rights cases.
- Providing an email forum to provide support for practitioners conducting casework under the Human Rights Act.

Membership

The network will focus on legal issues and casework under the Human Rights Act, and will be of most relevance to people with an interest in applying the Human Rights Act in legal casework and advocacy.

Meetings

We intend to hold meetings four times per year, spaced between the two Human Rights Office Community forums, so there will be something on every second month. Meetings will generally be held midweek, after business hours, to maximize attendance. Each meeting will focus on a particular topic, with a guest speaker to facilitate a discussion about how the Human Rights Act could be applied in that area of law and to provide practical examples and case studies. We will investigate whether Continuing Legal Education points could be obtained for these meetings/workshops.

Electronic Mailing List

Network participants will also be able to communicate more regularly through an electronic mailing list to be established by the ANU. Any discussion about case work on this forum would need to be done in very general and de-identified terms to avoid breaching confidentiality.

For further information, or to be added to the email list when it gets up and running, please contact Gabrielle McKinnon, ANU, ph 61257103, email: Gabrielle.McKinnon@anu.edu.au