

human rights

Version 3: June 2022



### Planning and reporting

### Purpose of this guide

The *Human Rights Act 2019* (the Act) imposes obligations on public entities as defined by section 9 of the Act. 'Public entity' is defined to include government departments, statutory bodies and various other entities, including functional public entities (i.e. organisations that perform functions of a public nature). The term 'agency' is used in this document to refer to government entities, such as departments and statutory bodies.

This guide is directed at agencies. While other public entities may find this guide useful please note that some requirements will not apply to all public entities.

This guide will help agencies:

- demonstrate their commitment to human rights through planning processes
- comply with their reporting obligations under the Act.

Aside from references to specific provisions of the Act, this guide is not intended to be prescriptive and agencies are not obliged to adopt the processes outlined in this guide. It provides general guidance only, and may be adapted by agencies to suit their specific needs.

### Building a human rights culture

#### **Queensland Government Human Rights Strategy**

The Act respects, protects, and promotes the human rights of all people in Queensland. It requires agencies to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights. Human rights can only be limited in certain circumstances and after careful consideration. The purpose of the Act<sup>1</sup> is to:

- protect and promote human rights
- help build a culture in the Queensland public sector that respects and promotes human rights
- help promote a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights.

<u>The Queensland Government Human Rights Strategy</u> sets out the Government's vision for embedding human rights in the Queensland public sector:

Our vision is for a modern, fair and responsive Queensland where we respect, protect and promote human rights.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is found in section 3 of the Act.

The Queensland Government is committed to embedding human rights in all that we do. We will exercise public functions in a principled way, compatible with human rights, by putting people first in all our actions, decisions and interactions. Human rights will be part of our culture through both our everyday business, and strategy and planning.

We will achieve this objective by ensuring that:

- every agency is committed to achieving our human rights vision and objectives and follows this framework for how it will be achieved
- human rights are reflected in agency, divisional and business unit visions, values and plans
- respecting human rights is part of what it means to be a public service employee and is incorporated in Queensland Government position descriptions, staff induction and ongoing professional development.

--Queensland Government Human Rights Strategy

### Reflecting human rights in planning processes

#### Strategic planning

Agencies should reflect human rights in their **strategic plan** in line with the *Queensland Government Human Rights Strategy*. This will help agencies to think about how they can respect, protect, and promote human rights when they are renewing the strategies in their strategic plan. Agencies should consider how their strategy and planning can:

- help build a human rights culture within the agency
- promote human rights in everyday business.

For example, strategic plans could identify how objectives, strategies, and performance indicators for customer service, workforce capability, and other relevant areas respect, protect and promote human rights. Agencies could refer to human rights in more than one strategy.

Agencies could include statements in their strategic plan that promote a shared understanding of their commitment to human rights through all levels of the agency. This statement could be adapted for strategic plans:

We will respect, protect and promote human rights in our decision-making and actions.

Agencies could include this with their introductory text, or as a lead-in statement to the agency's objectives.

The Act does not require agencies to reflect human rights in the vision presented in their strategic plan. However, agencies may choose to refer to one or more of the human rights protected by the



Act that are particularly relevant to the agency. Additionally, agencies may choose to include a human rights value statement in their strategic plan.

Vision and value statements can be powerful tools for shaping an organisation's culture. These statements have total organisational reach and, when used effectively, can be both aspirational and affirming for staff. Including human rights in vision and value statements can guide staff decision-making in complex situations where the right decision is not clear cut.<sup>2</sup>

For the minimum information requirements of a strategic plan in relation to human rights, refer to the Queensland Government <u>Agency Planning Requirements</u> published by the <u>Department of the Premier and Cabinet</u>.

#### Operational planning

Operational plans should reflect an agency's commitment to human rights and align with the overarching statements of their strategic plan.

Agencies and business areas are encouraged to consider how operational plans reflect their commitment to human rights through their everyday business and interactions with the community.

Agencies should also consider how their operational plan(s) will support their reporting obligations.<sup>3</sup> The Act requires agencies to report about:

- actions to further the objects of the Act
- certain details about complaints received by the agency
- details of reviews of policies, programs, procedures, practices or services undertaken for compatibility with human rights.

To build a human rights culture, agencies will have to undertake actions in a range of areas that could be included in an agency's operational plan. Some of these actions will be particularly relevant in the lead up and commencement phase of the Act; however, most actions will have ongoing relevance.

An agency's operational plan could identify specific actions they will undertake. Alternatively, agencies could adapt the following general statement:

We will review policies, programs, procedures, practices and service delivery to ensure that decisions and actions are compatible with human rights and ensure that human rights are central to the work we do.

Agencies involved in developing policy and legislation may also want to reference how a commitment to human rights is incorporated in this work.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Kristen Hilton, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner 2016 Report on the operation of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities – Nov 2017 p.24

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This requirement is found in section 97 of the Act.

For the minimum information requirements of an operational plan in relation to human rights, refer to the Queensland Government *Agency Planning Requirements* published by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The following table suggests actions that could be included in operational plans:

Type of activity	Potential action
Communication and awareness raising activities about human rights	<ul> <li>Informing staff about the Act and their obligations under the Act.</li> <li>Supporting actions to build a human rights culture, such as encouraging human rights champions reporting to Ministers / Executive on compatibility.</li> <li>Informing clients and customers about their rights.</li> </ul>
Education and training activities about human rights	<ul> <li>Supporting staff access to, and encouraging attendance at, relevant training and information sessions.</li> <li>Evaluating staff awareness of obligations under the Act.</li> <li>Incorporating respect for human rights into ongoing professional development and performance plans.</li> </ul>
Staff recruitment processes	<ul> <li>Incorporating a commitment to human rights in position descriptions and staff inductions.</li> </ul>
Engagement with portfolio entities	<ul> <li>Ensuring portfolio entities are aware of their obligations (including entities that perform functions of a public nature).</li> <li>Including human rights obligations in relevant contracts and procurement processes.</li> </ul>
Legislation-related activities	<ul> <li>Reviewing legislation and subordinate legislation for human rights compatibility.</li> <li>Ensuring human rights are central to the development of policy and legislation.</li> </ul>
Review and development of policies, programs, procedures, practices and services	<ul> <li>Reviewing policies for compatibility with human rights.</li> <li>Ensuring human rights are central to the development of new policies, programs, procedures, practices and services.</li> <li>Engaging with and consulting the public in the review and development of policies, procedures and services.</li> </ul>
Managing human rights complaints	<ul> <li>Maintaining internal processes to effectively and accountably manage human rights complaints.</li> <li>Recording human rights complaints, including outcomes.</li> </ul>
Actions to promote a dialogue about rights	<ul> <li>Pro-actively responding to and monitoring complaints, reports of the Commissioner, and relevant court decisions.</li> </ul>
Reporting about human rights	<ul> <li>Recording actions and outcomes related to reporting obligations under section 97 of the Act.</li> </ul>



Type of activity	Potential action
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul> <li>Monitoring and evaluating how the agency has achieved the objects of the Act, namely:         <ul> <li>protecting and promoting human rights</li> <li>building a culture of human rights</li> <li>promoting dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of rights.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Reporting about human rights

#### Providing information to the Queensland Human Rights Commission

All agencies have to provide information to the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC) upon request. The Commissioner can request information to prepare:

- the QHRC's annual report
- a report about a matter relevant to the performance of the QHRC or Commissioner's functions under the Act.

The Commissioner can seek information that is within the agency's control, but cannot obtain personal information that is not publicly available. The Commissioner can only use the information for the purpose that it was requested. The Commissioner must also seek the information through a notice that states why the request is being made, and the period of time the agency has to provide the information.<sup>4</sup>

### Reporting by the Queensland Human Rights Commission

The Commissioner has powers to publish information about human rights complaints, and is required to prepare an annual report about the operation of the Act. The Act sets out what must be included in the Commissioner's annual report<sup>5</sup>, including information about complaints.

The Commissioner's annual report may include other information the Commissioner considers appropriate. This includes the names of agencies and details of actions in cases where human rights complaints have not been resolved.<sup>6</sup> However, the report cannot include personal information about an individual unless it has been previously published or given for the purpose of publication.

### Annual reporting by agencies

The Act defines 'public entity' to include government departments, statutory bodies and various other entities, including functional public entities (i.e. organisations that perform public functions). Although all public entities can choose to report on actions they have taken to promote human rights, under the Act, public entities who have to prepare an annual report under section 63 of the



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This is found in section 90 of the Act.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This is found in section 91 of the Act.

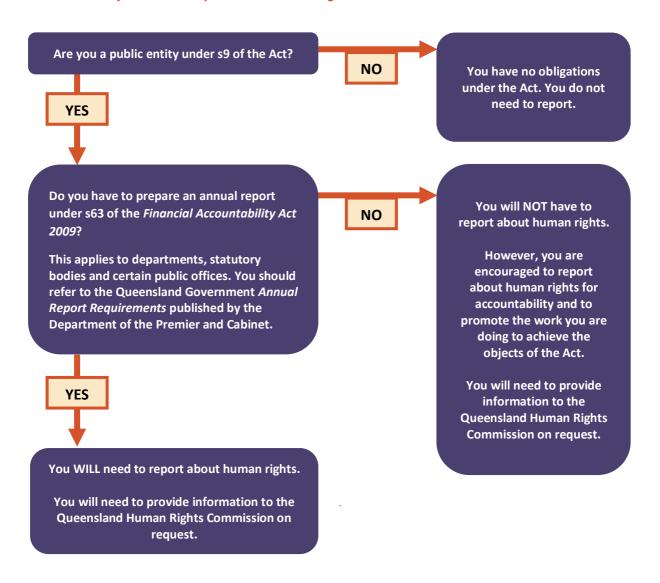
 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 6}$  This is found in section 91(3) of the Act.

Financial Accountability Act 2009 have specific human rights reporting obligations.<sup>7</sup> For the remainder of this guide, the term 'agency' refers to these public entities.

Section 97 of the Act requires agencies to include details in their annual report about:

- actions taken to further the objects of the Act
- human rights complaints received by the agency, including number and outcome of complaints and other information prescribed by regulation
- reviews of policies, programs, procedures, practices or services undertaken for compatibility with human rights.

Flowchart: Do you need to report about human rights?



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> This requirement is found in section 97 of the Act.



### What information should an agency's annual report include?

Agencies will have to include details in their annual report about actions they have taken to further the objects of the Act, complaints received and reviews undertaken. Reporting on human rights is an opportunity to promote your agency's leadership and actions in furthering human rights in Queensland. This information will also inform annual reporting by the Commissioner about the operation of the Act.

The Act requires agencies to report about *details* as distinct from numbers. For example, agencies may choose to describe how policies have integrated human rights or include a specific example rather than simply stating the number of policies that have been reviewed.

The QHRC has indicated that they will be looking for engaging examples from agencies; for example, where there has been a positive outcome or change made in an organisation (whether it results from a complaint or not). You can find examples from Victoria on pages 14-15 of this guide.

#### Reporting about actions to further the objects of the Act

Agencies need to provide information in their annual reports about actions they have taken during the reporting period to further the objects of the Act.<sup>8</sup> In many cases it is likely that actions will be relevant to more than one object. Agencies may choose to report against each of the main objects separately or discuss them together.

The actions that agencies report on will vary between agencies and between reporting periods; however, many actions will be ongoing as agencies build a human rights culture.

The table below contains actions that agencies could include in their annual reports. Agencies have discretion about how much information to include in their reporting, but should consider including examples where appropriate.

Reporting requirement	Examples of actions that may be taken
97(2)(a) Details of any actions taken during the reporting period to further the objects of the Act	<ul> <li>At a strategic level:         <ul> <li>reporting on relevant strategies in the strategic plan</li> <li>encouraging human rights champions at senior leadership level</li> <li>training for senior leaders</li> <li>conducting awareness raising throughout agency</li> <li>incorporating human rights into executive performance agreements</li> <li>incorporating human rights into strategic plan</li> <li>engaging with functional public entities to raise awareness of obligations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

 $<sup>^{8}</sup>$  This requirement is found in section 97(2)(a) of the Act. The main objects of the Act are found in section 3.



Reporting requirement	Examples of actions that may be taken
- Capan concern	<ul> <li>reporting to ministers or the Executive on human rights compatibility and culture initiatives</li> <li>communicating your commitment to human rights to the public</li> <li>engaging with community during development of new proposals.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>At an operational level:         <ul> <li>reporting on relevant actions in the operational plan</li> <li>training staff</li> <li>incorporating human rights into staff performance plans</li> <li>conducting awareness raising for staff and clients</li> <li>incorporating human rights into operational plans</li> <li>incorporating human rights into recruitment processes</li> <li>including human rights considerations in relevant contracts and procurement processes</li> <li>reviewing, using or developing evaluation tools to monitor human rights awareness among staff</li> <li>reviewing legislation and regulations for compatibility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>putting human rights issues on meeting agendas</li> <li>engaging community about service delivery by seeking feedback for potential improvements.</li> </ul>

#### Reporting about human rights complaints and outcomes

Agencies have to include details about human rights complaints in their annual reports. <sup>9</sup> This includes:

- the number of human rights complaints received by the agency
- the outcome of complaints
- any other information prescribed by regulation (no other information is currently prescribed by regulation).

The minimum annual reporting requirements are set out in the *Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government agencies* published by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

A human rights complaint is defined as a complaint about an alleged contravention of section 58(1) by a public entity in relation to an act or decision of the public entity. People who manage and report on human rights complaints should refer to complaints procedures relevant to their business area and agency (as supported by guidance from best practice complaints handling resources including the Australian Standard for handling of customer complaints, and the Queensland Ombudsman). Agencies can find current best practice complaints handling resources at the website of the Queensland Ombudsman. Complaints procedures relevant to your agency will help you assess



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This requirement is found in section 97(2)(b) of the Act.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The definition is in section 63 of the Act.

whether a complaint is a human rights complaint, including whether an expression of dissatisfaction meets the threshold for a complaint, or is simply part of normal client or employee interaction where concerns may be resolved at the point of contact.

Information about managing human rights complaints is also contained in the <u>Guide: Handling</u> <u>human rights complaints</u>. People who manage human rights complaints should record the details required by their agency. This information will inform reporting on human rights complaints.

Agencies must report on outcomes of complaints received. This requirement will be satisfied if agencies report on the numbers of human rights complaints resulting in **further action**, and the number of complaints resulting in **no further action**, or report other information that indicates the outcome of the complaint. Recording and reporting additional information may help agencies identify trends over time.

Agencies are encouraged to include additional narrative or context for human rights complaints received by the agency. Agencies should also consider including examples that identify the situation, the human right(s) involved, and how the complaint was resolved (mentioning outcomes for the agency and/or the complainant).

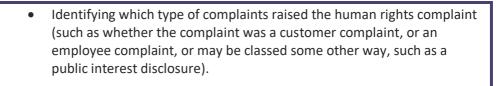
The following tables provide information and suggestions about how to report on the number and outcome of complaints received by agencies.

<ul> <li>staff).</li> <li>Include human rights complaints that that have been referred back to the agency by the QHRC if that complaint has not already been reported as a human rights complaint by the agency.</li> <li>Each human rights complaint should only be reported once, even if it raises more than one human right.</li> </ul>	Reporting requirement	How to report on number of complaints received
<ul> <li>Do not include complaints that are not about an act or decision of your agency or staff—misdirected complaints should be referred to the correct agency.</li> <li>Agencies should record the following information for their own purposes.</li> <li>Agencies may choose to report this information but are not required to:         <ul> <li>How a human rights complaint was identified (such as whether it was identified by the complainant or by the agency).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul> <li>human rights complaint. Include any complaint assessed by the agency as a human rights complaint even if the complainant did not identify it as one.</li> <li>Include all human rights complaints made by people external to the agency (such as customers), or by people internal to the agency (such as staff).</li> <li>Include human rights complaints that that have been referred back to the agency by the QHRC if that complaint has not already been reported as a human rights complaint by the agency.</li> <li>Each human rights complaint should only be reported once, even if it raises more than one human right.</li> <li>Do not include complaints that are not about an act or decision of your agency or staff—misdirected complaints should be referred to the correct agency.</li> <li>Agencies should record the following information for their own purposes.</li> <li>Agencies may choose to report this information but are not required to:</li> <li>How a human rights complaint was identified (such as whether it was</li> </ul>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> This requirement is found in section 97(2)(b)(i) of the Act.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Section 63 defines human rights complaint.



Section 219A of the *Public Service Act 2008* requires departments to report on the number of customer complaints which result in further action and the number which result in no further action. Many complaint record systems are organised around this categorisation of action or no further action. An agency may find it expedient to continue to use these categorisations to report on outcomes of human rights complaints.

Agencies that report on the outcome of human rights complaints using these outcome categories are strongly encouraged to make it clear what sorts of actions are included within the 'further action' category.

Reporting requirement	How to report on outcome of complaints received
Outcome of complaints <sup>13</sup>	Agencies are required to report information which indicates the outcome of complaints received.
	The following actions are examples of outcomes agencies may choose to report: <sup>14</sup>
	<ul> <li>explanation</li> <li>change original decision</li> <li>apology</li> <li>business improvement (such as review or development of policy or procedure; staff training or education; service improvement; modifications to improve accessibility)</li> <li>disciplinary action.</li> </ul>
	Agencies may choose to report by using the overarching categories of <i>Further action</i> and <i>No further action</i> . Agencies who report this way are strongly encouraged to indicate what outcomes/actions they include within these categories.

#### Reporting about reviews undertaken for compatibility

Agencies have to include information about reviews undertaken for compatibility with human rights in their annual reports. <sup>15</sup> This includes details about reviews of policies, programs, procedures, practices, or services.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> This requirement is found in section 97(2)(b)(ii) of the Act

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Please note that these actions are not mutually exclusive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> This requirement is found in section 97(2)(c) of the Act.

As they prepare for the substantive provisions of the Act to commence, agencies will be undertaking reviews; however, these activities will also be ongoing. To build a human rights culture, agencies should regularly examine how they conduct their everyday business to ensure their actions, decisions and interactions are compatible with human rights.

The table below contains actions that agencies could include in their annual reports. Agencies have discretion about how much information to include in their reporting, but should consider including examples where appropriate.

Reporting requirements	Examples of actions that may be taken <sup>16</sup>
Review of policies for human rights compatibility	<ul> <li>Review or development of strategic or operational policies.</li> <li>Incorporating human rights into complaint handling policies.</li> <li>Incorporating human rights into workplace policies.</li> </ul>
Review of programs for human rights compatibility	<ul> <li>Review of eligibility criteria for programs.</li> <li>Review of who accesses programs to identify potential access issues.</li> </ul>
Review of procedures for human rights compatibility	<ul> <li>Review of procedures.</li> <li>Incorporating human rights issues into decision-making frameworks.</li> <li>Incorporating human rights into complaint handling procedures.</li> </ul>
Review of practices for human rights compatibility	<ul> <li>Review practices of administrative decision-makers.</li> <li>Training decision-makers (including in response to concerns or complaints).</li> <li>Ensuring contracts and procurement processes incorporate human rights.</li> </ul>
Review of services for human rights compatibility	<ul> <li>Consulting with community to identify human rights issues and expectations.</li> <li>Responding to concerns or complaints.</li> <li>Review of service delivery models.</li> </ul>

#### Reporting about the work of functional public entities connected to your agency

The Act does not create new requirements to report about functional public entities in annual reports. Agencies do not need to report about whether functional public entities comply with their obligations under the Act. An agency that funds a functional public entity to do work on their behalf may include auditing or quality assurance management for human rights compliance during procurement and funding processes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Reviews may be conducted proactively (such as preparing for the Act to commence); in response to a complaint where an issue is identified; or as part of ongoing business activities.



For example, a Department may engage a non-government organisation (NGO) to provide particular services to vulnerable people. The Department does not currently report on the NGO in their annual report. The Act does not require the Department to report on work the NGO does to respect, protect and promote human rights, or human rights complaints received by the NGO. The Department may choose to include a periodic reporting obligation or conduct an audit of the NGO's progress towards respecting, protecting and promoting human rights.



### **Examples**

Agencies are encouraged to include in their annual reports examples of how they have:

- furthered the objects of the Act
- dealt with complaints
- undertaken reviews for compatibility with human rights.

The following examples are from Queensland Government agencies that have provided high-quality information in their annual reports, and are included for illustrative purposes only.

Example: Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy – Annual Report 2020-21

The information contained in the annual report provides specific information about how the department is undertaking activities to advance its commitment to build a culture of human rights. Information included is specific and detailed, rather than high-level, and clearly states how staff knowledge and capability has been uplifted to assist them with their obligations to consider human rights in decision-making.

### Supporting a leading human rights practice

In addition to general human rights training completed by staff online, a range of tailored human rights training was developed and delivered to specific areas of the business, supporting staff to meet their human rights obligations, including:

- Housing and Homelessness Services (HHS) delivered virtual training on human rights obligations to local leadership teams across the state to support consistent best practice and protect staff in the decisions they make. The HHS Service Delivery Help Desk also provided on-the-job human rights information, support and coaching to frontline service delivery staff
- HHS co-designed and hosted a workshop with the Queenslanders with Disability Network, with
  people with lived experience of disability and staff. The Queensland Human Rights Commissioner,
  opened the workshop and real-life scenarios were used to explore practice, with a view to human
  rights, inclusion and person-centred approaches
- leaders and staff from Community Services participated in training sessions with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's Human Rights Unit, with learnings specifically designed around community services-based scenarios
- a mandatory human rights module, tailored with relevant scenarios, was added to Community Recovery Ready Reserve training to provide Ready Reserves with practical understanding of how human rights apply to disaster response work
- Smart Service Queensland implemented annual "Human Rights for Leaders" online training for managers, directors and contact centre team leaders, and approximately 50 per cent of the target cohort completed the training
- 10 virtual human rights workshop sessions were delivered to business areas in HHS and Smart Service Queensland. Participants were sent resources and an activity pack, ahead of scenariobased training, on how to properly consider human rights
- a Human Rights Compatibility Consideration Guide was developed to assist staff in the proper consideration of human rights in decision-making and to support good-practice recordkeeping.

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy Annual Report 2020-21, pg. 36



Activities provided in the annual report are separated into different sections in accordance with how they relate to the objectives of the HR Act, and demonstrate how the department is promoting the HR Act internally and with stakeholders.

### Promoting a dialogue about human rights

The department promoted a rich dialogue about human rights throughout 2020–21, to staff, clients, related entities, and other stakeholders. Highlights included:

- Human Rights Month and International Human Rights Day were promoted on the department's intranet, raising awareness of human rights and encouraging staff to complete their human rights training, and discuss human rights with colleagues
- a video was produced for staff which features the department's First Nations Advisor, and two staff members talking about what human rights mean to them and their work
- Community Services partnered with the Queensland Human Rights Commission to deliver awareness-raising training at nine regional locations, for more than 500 non-government organisation representatives, who were advised on human rights responsibilities as a public entity and implementing human rights-focused service delivery
- HHS commenced a collaboration project with the Queensland Council of Social Service aiming to improve human rights literacy across the housing and homelessness sector and documenting and promoting HHS's journey towards a culture of human rights.

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy Annual Report 2020-21, pg. 36-37.

Annual report content about complaints provides information about:

- complaint source (client/customer complaint or internal staff complaint)
- complaint outcomes at time of publication
- the rights alleged to be engaged commonly across the complaints
- how the department has used the learnings from the complaints to drive improvements within its practices, processes and policies.

### Responding to human rights complaints and refining our human rights practice

The department received 30 human rights complaints during 2020-21, with 29 originating from clients and one internal complaint. Assessments of the Assessments of the 29 complaints found the department's relevant actions and decisions were 'compatible with human rights' in 25 matters, incompatible in three, and a finding is pending in one complaint. One complaint was referred to the Queensland Human Rights Commission. The rights most commonly exercised by complainants included: the right to equality; freedoms of expression and movement; privacy and reputation; and the right to property.

Insights from human rights complaints are used to inform continuous business improvement; for example, the HHS Service Delivery Help Desk's human rights advice service, and new content in the HOME business system that assists staff with scenario-based examples and guidance on properly considering human rights. These improvements have been driven by opportunities to enhance support for frontline staff in their human rights practice

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy Annual Report 2020-21, pg. 36-37.



Example: Department of Environment and Science – Annual Report 2020-21

Annual report provides information about how the department integrated human rights into its decision-making. Annual report provides information about matters that are currently in progress that will affect how the department ensures that it is compliant with the HR Act in the future.

#### The COVID-19 response

During the pandemic and associated government responses, the department played an important role in the state government's efforts to protect and support Queenslanders. For example, we temporarily closed national parks and camping areas, and managed camping numbers as restrictions eased. In taking these actions, the department was mindful of its obligation to ensure that any limitations on human rights were reasonable and justified. The actions taken by the department limited the Right to Freedom of Movement (Section 19) but were held to be consistent with the *Human Rights Act 2019* by protecting the Right to Life (section 16).

#### Human rights watching briefs

In a matter currently before the Land Court (Waratah Coal Pty Ltd v. Youth Verdict Ltd and Others), the department assumed its statutory party role as a model litigant and assisted the court in its procedural and legal considerations of complex human rights matters. The department has continued to engage with other agencies and the Human Rights Commission on the specific application of Section 28 of the Human Rights Act 2019 (Cultural Rights for Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islander People), to ensure legal compliance and strengthen policy (including the department's Gurra Gurra Framework). This is resulting in changes to internal processes. The department recognises the need for further legal analysis and advice on how to best protect rights under Section 28.

Department of Environment and Science Annual Report 2020-21, pg. 49



Example: Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships – Annual Report 2020-21

The information contained in the annual report provides specific information about the legislative review the department has undertaken, with information about its intended course of action in the future ensure that its portfolio legislation is compatible with human rights. The information provided also contextualises the department's actions, and details benefits that proposed approaches will provide.

#### Reviews

During the reporting period, the following reviews were undertaken for compatibility with human rights:

- all legislation for which the department has administrative responsibility has been reviewed for compatibility with human rights. The department proposes to:
  - include amendments to address incompatibility in relation to one provision of the Disability Services Act 2006 (DSA) and two provisions of the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 in the next suitable Bill progressing amendments to portfolio legislation
  - consider two DSA provisions as part of an ongoing review of Queensland's current legislative framework for authorising the use of restrictive practices
  - considered options to address the identified legislative incompatibilities with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003, Family Responsibilities Act 2008 and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 (JLOM Act) as part of the ongoing reviews of these Acts. This approach will enable consultation with a broad range of stakeholders
- three DSA provisions were repealed and replaced as part of the Disability and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Act 2020, which commenced on 1 February 2021. As per the Statement of Compatibility for this Amendment Act, the replacement provisions are considered compatible with human rights. The Human Rights Statement of Compatibility for the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Act 2021 is available at: https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/bill.first.hrc/bill-2020-040

Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships 2020-21, pg. 48

