

Having trouble viewing this email? [View online](#)



Media statement

**14 MARCH 2025
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Statement from Queensland Human Rights Commissioner Scott McDougall regarding delay on anti-discrimination law changes

I was notified by the Attorney-General this morning that legislated changes to Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act due to commence on 1 July this year would be [paused for further consultation](#).

In light of the extensive consultations already undertaken on these reforms, and the significant buy-in from stakeholders, I am bewildered by this announcement.

[These changes](#) – which would strengthen the existing obligations on business, government and organisations to prevent discrimination and harassment, and protect more Queenslanders from discrimination, including people experiencing homelessness and victim-survivors of domestic and family violence – have been extensively consulted on and are widely supported by stakeholders from across the community.

The changes are the result of a review the Queensland Human Rights Commission (the Commission) conducted in 2021-22 to ensure the Act reflects the needs and expectations of a contemporary and inclusive society. Across the course of that review the Commission conducted more than 120 stakeholder consultations, 4 public consultations, and 6 roundtables, received 159 written submissions, and over 1100 responses to an online survey.

Overwhelmingly, the Commission heard that discrimination and harassment cause significant harm and that the system as it stands lacks a preventative focus, instead relying on people who have been impacted by discrimination and harassment to bring complaints in order for the law to be enforced.

As well as the Commission-led review, the bill as passed by parliament in September last year was informed by several inquiries and reviews by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, and 2 prior inquiries by the parliamentary Legal Affairs and Safety Committee.

A draft of the bill was shared for public consultation which further informed the amendments to the Act.

The bill itself was then consulted on again as part of the legislative process by a Queensland parliamentary committee, who noted in their report supporting the passage of the bill that the changes were broadly supported by stakeholders. This reflects our own experience in talking to hundreds of Queenslanders about their views on the law.

To pause the implementation of all these changes due to a concern about one aspect of the reforms, with no notice and no concerns previously having been raised with us, is a disproportionate response. To claim the reforms were rushed and not consultative enough is additionally misleading.

The Commission has been working with industry and community stakeholders ahead of 1 July to prepare for implementation and have been well on track to achieve this.

At no stage have the concerns flagged by the Attorney-General today been raised with me or my staff at the Commission.

These reforms have been almost 4 years in the making and there is no need to further delay them. The extension of discrimination protections particularly, for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and people experiencing homelessness - groups that are disproportionately affected by discrimination and harassment - was a fundamental recognition of their heightened vulnerability. By delaying these reforms, the government is leaving them without the protection they need.

I am very disappointed, not only at this decision by the state government but by the manner of its announcement and the lack of engagement with my Commission and the many other stakeholders who have been preparing for the changes.

I will be seeking urgent clarification from the Attorney-General on the future of these reforms.

More information

The changes that were due to commence on 1 July 2025 would have:

- Protected more Queenslanders from discrimination, including victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, and people experiencing homelessness.
- Protected more Queenslanders from vilification, including people with disability, and made the law more effective and responsive to the harm caused by vilification.
- Introduced a legal requirement for businesses, organisations and government agencies to prevent discrimination, rather than respond to problems after they occur. This is called a 'positive duty' and:
 - Means these entities need to take reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, as far as possible, on the basis of all the characteristics already protected under our Anti-Discrimination Act – including sex, race, age, religion, and sexuality among other things.
 - Applies across all the areas of public life covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act – including workplaces and providers of education, accommodation or goods and services.
 - Requires entities to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, vilification, and other conduct covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act.

- Introduce workplace reforms based on the federal Respect At Work report, making sex-based harassment and workplaces which are offensive, humiliating or intimidating on the basis of sex unlawful.
- Better recognise intersectional discrimination, and allow people to make complaints on combined grounds.
- Make definitions and legal tests easier to understand and apply, and give people longer timeframes to make complaints to the Commission.

More information is published in the [report](#): Building belonging: **Review of Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act 1991**.

Contact

Communications and media team at the Queensland Human Rights Commission

- 0407 657 411
- comms@qhrc.qld.gov.au



Queensland Legislative Assembly

Number: 5825T393



29 APR 2025

Tabled ☒

By leave ☐

MP: Hon. Grace

Clerk's Signature: [Signature]