

Significant achievements

- The *Same-Sex: Same Entitlements* Inquiry put federal laws under the human rights microscope. It found that 58 laws discriminate against more than 20 000 Australian same-sex couples – simply because of who they love. The report and community guide was officially launched in Sydney on 22 June 2007.
- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook several projects commemorating the 10th anniversary of the *Bringing them home* report and coincided with commemorative events for the 40th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum.
- The Social Justice Commissioner, along with project partners, continued to promote the Indigenous Health Equality campaign through promotional events, speeches and information resources.
- The Sex Discrimination Unit's major project throughout this reporting year was the women, men, work and family project, which entered its final stage with the launch of the *It's About Time: Women, men, work and family* final paper in March 2007. The launch was followed up by a number of community, business and academic forums around the country to disseminate the findings of the paper and gather feedback on the paper's recommendations.
- HREOC developed a number of projects aimed at supporting Muslim communities in defending themselves against religious abuse and hatred. These included: the *Unlocking Doors* Project aimed at facilitating a dialogue between Muslim communities and police; and a Muslim women's forum on human rights, entitled *Living Spirit: Muslim Women and Human Rights Project – the right to participate in social change*.
- HREOC welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly, and applauded the Australian Government's signing of the Convention on 30 March 2007. HREOC hosted a workshop on 27–28 June on the new Convention for representatives of disability peak organisations, disability advisory bodies and state and territory equal opportunity agencies.
- Action Plans under the Disability Discrimination Act provide an important mechanism for organisations to structure their own compliance efforts. As at 30 June 2007, 516 plans were registered with HREOC (an increase from 368 in June 2006).
- HREOC contributed to policy development and legislative review through the many submissions made during the reporting period. These were on a range of issues including: Aboriginal land rights, Australian citizenship, the Commonwealth access card, pay equity and counter-terrorism measures.

- One report of a breach of human rights was completed under the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cth).
- HREOC considered intervening in nine court cases that raised human rights issues and made an application to intervene in two matters. During 2006–07, Commissioners were granted leave to appear as *amicus curiae* in five unlawful discrimination cases.
- The Legal Section organises seminars on topics of current interest in domestic or international human rights law. During 2006–07, seminars were held on: recent issues in Australia’s legal response to terrorism, stolen wages – the way forward, and native title – developments in case law and practice.
- HREOC’s most substantial international program involvement is with the China-Australia Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program (HRTC), which is an integral part of Australia’s annual inter-governmental Dialogue on Human Rights with China. HREOC also participates in the annual Australia-Vietnam Dialogue on International Organisations and Legal Issues, including Human Rights. HREOC attended the 2007 Dialogue held in Hanoi in April 2007. HREOC also participated in the Laos-Australia Human Rights Dialogue meeting, held in Vientiane in October 2006.
- Over the past four reporting years HREOC has received, on average, around 10 000 enquiries each year. In 2006–07, 16 606 enquiries were dealt with by the Complaint Information Service.
- Over the past four reporting years HREOC has received, on average, around 1 250 complaints each year. In 2006–07 HREOC received 1 779 complaints.
- While there was an increase in the number of complaints received in this reporting year, the Complaint Handling Section finalised 94 percent of matters within 12 months – a slight improvement on figures for the previous reporting year. Thirty-eight percent were finalised by conciliation – this is consistent with the conciliation rate for the previous three reporting years.
- In 2006–07 HREOC issued 172 media releases and alerts, the President and Commissioners had 18 opinion pieces published in major metro newspapers across Australia and have conducted approximately 800 media interviews. This represents an increase of 70 percent in media releases and 25 percent in media interviews from the previous reporting year.
- Usage of HREOC’s website has increased by 50 percent from the previous year. There were 12 612 942 page views in 2006–07 equating to 85 281 017 hits on the site in total.
- HREOC’s online human rights education resources are widely used by educators, both nationally and internationally. During 2006–07, the resources received 1 140 587 page views. This is an increase of 25 percent on usage of the online education resources since the previous financial year.
- In addition to all HREOC publications being made available on HREOC’s website, around 100 000 publications were dispatched in hardcopy format during 2006–07.
- The most popular publications were *Face the Facts*, *Voices of Australia* (magazine and CD), *Good Practice*, *Good Business* CD and *The Complaint Guide*.