

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS 2024 SNAPSHOT

Across Australia, people with mental health challenges are being denied their basic human rights — in hospitals, workplaces, schools, homes and communities.

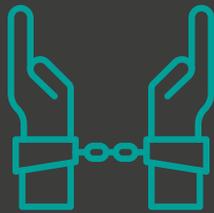
These are the findings from Australia's first and only consumer-led human rights survey for people living with mental health challenges.



Discrimination is widespread and structural

9 in 10 heard discriminatory or harmful comments.
2 in 5 could not secure work due to discrimination.
1 in 3 workers were bullied or harrassed.
9 in 10 said media portrayals were negative or unfair.

Rights shouldn't depend on diagnosis, income, race, gender, or postcode.



Coercion is built into mental health systems

1 in 2 people avoided seeking care when in inpatient mental health units because they feared coercion.
1 in 4 agreed to treatment only to avoid being forced.
Nearly half of acute admissions are forced and physical and chemical restraint are routinely practiced.

No one should fear the place they go to for help.



Poverty and unaffordable care trap people in crisis

1 in 13 experienced unstable housing or homelessness in 2024.
Less than half could see a bulk-billing GP,
only 1 in 10 had access a bulk-billed psychiatrist,
and less than 1 in 5 could see a bulk-billed psychologist.

People need their basic needs met to live well.

Human rights exist in principle - not in people's lives

Australia is the only western liberal democracy without a Human Rights Act.

Right now, people's rights depend on:

- which state they live in
- which hospital they enter
- whether the system chooses to follow the law

A human rights act can make our rights real by:

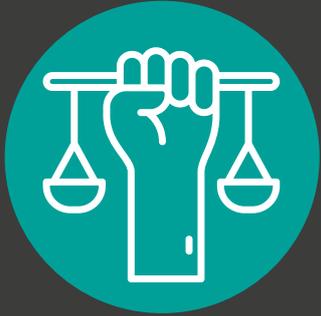
- Creating enforceable rights to dignity, equality, safety & participation
- Requiring Medicare, Centrelink, the NDIS and national systems to comply
- Providing pathways to challenge rights breaches
- Ensuring Parliament justify laws that limit rights

JOIN THE HRLC CAMPAIGN FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS ACT



OUR NATIONAL ADVOCACY ASKS

END DISCRIMINATION & BUILD EQUALITY



- Introduce a national Human Rights Act that protects people with psychosocial disability.
- Create a positive duty requiring workplaces, services and governments to prevent discrimination before it occurs.
- Strengthen media standards to stop harmful portrayals.
- Introduce anti-vilification laws for people with mental health challenges.
- Embed intersectionality across all reforms.

ELIMINATE COERCIVE PRACTICES AND UPHOLD DIGNITY



- Withdraw Australia's interpretative declarations UN-CRPD allowing forced treatment.
- Create a National Roadmap to end seclusion, restraint and involuntary treatment.
- Establish a national supported decision-making model.
- Fully implement OPCAT with independent oversight.
- Publish national data on coercive practices.

GUARANTEE ECONOMIC SECURITY & ACCESS TO SUPPORTS



- Raise income support payments to meet the real cost of living.
- Fund a national psychosocial support system to meet unmet need for 500,000 people.
- Ensure affordable mental health care through expanded bulk billing.
- Expand Better Access to include peer-led and culturally safe supports.

Everyone can support us in build a rights-based future



Read and share the full
2024 Human Rights Report



Read and share the full
2025 Human Rights Survey



Join the HRLC campaign
for a Human Rights Act



Sign up to the Alliance and
follow us @NMHCAAlliance

Deliver on 30 years of unfinished business

Burdekin (1993), Disability Royal Commission (2023), Productivity Commission (2020 & 2025), and this report all show the same failures: discrimination, coercion, poverty and exclusion.

We do not need more reports — we need enforceable rights.

The Productivity Commission is unequivocal: reform will continue to fail until lived expertise leads design, implementation, governance, and evaluation.

Mental health consumers are ready to partner with governments to lead the future of a mental health system that will support us to live a good life.