



**FROM COMPLIANCE  
TO CULTURE:**

A toolkit for local governments  
to implement the Victorian  
Charter of Human Rights and  
Responsibilities

# HUMAN RIGHTS CHECKLIST:

Reviewing your local  
government's commitment  
to human rights

**Where does this fit into the toolkit?**

1. HUMAN RIGHTS MATTER LOCALLY: Preparing your local government to understand and implement the Charter
2. HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACTION: Local government milestones and how to meet them
3. HUMAN RIGHTS CHECKLIST: Reviewing your local government's commitment to human rights

3

Manual No.

FREEDOM

RESPECT

EQUALITY

DIGNITY

# HUMAN RIGHTS CHECKLIST:

Reviewing your local government's commitment to human rights

## FROM COMPLIANCE TO CULTURE:

A toolkit for local governments to implement the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

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### What's inside?

- Human rights checklist
- Useful links and recommended resources



## Human rights checklist

Many local governments throughout Victoria are already engaging with human rights in different ways, and most have taken steps to ensure legal compliance with the Charter.

This checklist is designed to help start a discussion internally about how far your local government has gone not only in acknowledging or raising human rights, but in taking the leadership and initiative to build a culture of human rights across the organisation and in the community.

This exercise in promoting socially progressive change lies with councillors and local government staff, who play a crucial role in taking our communities towards more dynamic, equal and sustainable futures.

You can use this checklist to review your local government's progress in building a human rights culture by giving a rating from 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely). You may wish to adapt this checklist to suit the specific circumstances of your local government.



## Human rights initiatives and milestones

PLAN	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
Prepare a human rights implementation plan	Is your local government working systematically to ensure legal compliance with human rights standards?		Is there a person or group of persons within your local government with primary responsibility for implementing the Charter – for example a Human Rights Officer or Implementation Team? Can council officers in your local government identify how the human rights in the Charter relate to and impact on their own work areas?	
Map social justice activity against Charter standards	Has your local government identified existing programs that may contribute to human rights-based outcomes?		Has your local government mapped those activities and initiatives against human rights standards? Has your local government identified existing programs that could be built on or enhanced by using rights-based language and standards?	
ACT: ELECTED COUNCIL	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
<b>Milestone 1</b> Review strategic planning	Do strategic planning documents in your local government raise human rights?		Do strategic planning documents make explicit commitments and identify human rights as a strategic priority?	
<b>Milestone 2</b> Review local laws	Has your local government initiated a review of local laws to ensure they are consistent with human rights?		Does your local government have a procedure or guidelines for drafting local laws to ensure compliance with the Charter?	
<b>Milestone 3</b> Provide training and education for councillors	Does your local government encourage and facilitate councillor participation in human rights training and education programs?		Is human rights training and education a core part of the councillor induction program? Have any councillors within your local government taken part in train-the-trainer programs for human rights?	



ACT: ELECTED COUNCIL	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
<p><b>Milestone 4</b> Demonstrate leadership</p>	<p>Do councillors within your local government consider human rights to be core business of Local Government?</p>		<p>Are there any councillors within your local government who champion human rights within local government and the community?</p> <p>Has your local government appointed human rights ambassadors in the community?</p>	
ACT: ADMINISTRATION	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
<p><b>Milestone 5</b> Review policies and procedures</p>	<p>Has your local government initiated a review of policies and procedures to ensure compatibility with human rights?</p>		<p>Have managers across council taken responsibility for reviewing the strategic documents within their program areas?</p> <p>Do the policies and procedures in distinct program areas make clear how human rights intersect with the program area in question?</p>	
<p><b>Milestone 6</b> Review staff Code of Conduct</p>	<p>Do council officers and other staff understand their legal obligations as public authorities under the human rights Charter?</p>		<p>Are human rights knowledge and skills a part of staff review, appraisal, expectations and management?</p>	
<p><b>Milestone 7</b> Provide training and education for staff</p>	<p>Does your local government encourage and facilitate staff to take part in human rights training and education?</p>		<p>Is human rights training and education a core part of the staff induction program?</p> <p>Have any staff members of your local government undertaken train-the-trainer initiatives, and have they led human rights education within the organisation?</p> <p>Do staff and managers have a good knowledge of key human rights resources and training providers?</p>	



ACT: COMMUNITY	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
<p><b>Milestone 8</b> Review service delivery protocols</p>	<p>Have your local government's service delivery protocols been reviewed for compatibility with human rights and the principles of PANEL: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment and Linkages?</p>		<p>Do your local government's service delivery protocols include clear commitments to human rights in both design and delivery of services? Does your local government have action plans that target vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community? Do your local government's service delivery protocols include ways to empower service-users to understand their rights?</p>	
<p><b>Milestone 9</b> Review community engagement practices</p>	<p>Has your local government reviewed its community engagement strategy for compatibility with human rights and the principles of PANEL: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment and Linkages?</p>		<p>Does your local government's community engagement strategy use rights-based language that empowers the people it involves? Does your local government take steps to target disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the community, as well as those with traditionally less access to local government when undertaking community engagement on specific issues? Does your local government encourage, support and facilitate human rights initiatives in the community?</p>	
<p><b>Milestone 10</b> Review complaints mechanism</p>	<p>Does your local government have an easy to access and understand claims and complaints procedure in place? Is information on how to make a claim or complaint available in clear and easy-to-understand language on your local government's website?</p>		<p>Does the claims and complaints procedure offer a way to express grievances other than in writing? Does your local government assist people to express grievances and make claims and complaints?</p>	



ACT: COMMUNITY	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
<p><b>Milestone 11</b> Provide information and facilitate human rights education for the community</p>	<p>Does your local government facilitate human rights training and education for the community?</p>		<p>Does your local government's website have a section dedicated to human rights information? Do your council newsletters provide human rights information and updates to the community, including how the Charter is relevant to the roles of local government in the community? Does your local government target disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the community for human rights education?</p>	
ACT: THIRD PARTIES	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
<p><b>Milestone 12</b> Ensure contracts and procurements are consistent with the Charter</p>	<p>Do your local government's contracts and procurements make clear the obligation of third parties to comply with Charter standards?</p>		<p>Does your local government accept contracts and procurements only from third parties that comply with human rights standards internally?</p>	
<p><b>Milestone 13</b> Review grants and funding policies</p>	<p>Do your local government's funding agreements include the requirement that the recipients comply with the human rights standards in the Charter?</p>		<p>Do grants and funding from your local government regularly go out to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the community, such as older people, people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, migrants and refugees?</p>	



REFLECT	Acknowledging human rights	Yes/No	Going above and beyond to build a human rights culture	Your rating (1 – 5)
Review human rights implementation plan	Does your local government perform regular reviews of human rights implementation		When reviewing human rights implementation does your local government actively identify ways to move beyond minimum legal compliance towards building a culture of human rights in the community?	
Report progress, challenges and achievements	Does your local government report on human rights progress to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission?		Does your local government report on human rights progress, challenges and lessons learned to council? Does your local government report on human rights progress and achievements to the community?	

Respect + Equality + Dignity  
 Equality + Respect + Freedom  
 Freedom + Dignity + Equality  
 Equality + Freedom + Dignity  
 Dignity + Equality + Freedom  
 Freedom + Respect + Dignity



## Useful links and recommended resources

What's it called?	Why chase it up?	Where's it from?	The link
Human Rights Consultation Community Discussion Paper	Poses a series of questions to prompt thinking about human rights, democratic institutions, and what government and the community can do to encourage a culture of respect for human rights in Victoria.	Department of Justice Victoria	<a href="http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/22a20280404a4042a4eaff5f2791d4a/communityconsultationpaper.htm?MOD=AJPERES">http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/22a20280404a4042a4eaff5f2791d4a/communityconsultationpaper.htm?MOD=AJPERES</a>
Local Government and Human Rights: Doing good service	Makes the case that human rights are not only relevant to local government but, used thoughtfully, can improve the delivery of key services.	International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP)	<a href="http://www.ichrp.org/files/summaries/18/124_summary_en.pdf">http://www.ichrp.org/files/summaries/18/124_summary_en.pdf</a>
Human Rights, a Tool for Change	Reviews the impact of the United Kingdom's Human Rights Act, 1998. Makes the case for understanding human rights beyond mere legalities, using them to strengthen participation in decision-making processes that impact everyday realities, especially for people rarely given a voice.	Economic Social and Research Council (ESRC)	<a href="http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/9339_ESRC_human_rights_tcm6-24471.pdf">http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/9339_ESRC_human_rights_tcm6-24471.pdf</a>
Human Rights Law Resource Centre	A leading national community legal centre that promotes and protects human rights in Australia. A section of the website is dedicated to educational and capacity-building publications and resources.	Human Rights Law Resource Centre	<a href="http://www.hrlrc.org.au/">http://www.hrlrc.org.au/</a>



What's it called?	Why chase it up?	Where's it from?	The link
Using the Charter in Policy and Practice	Examines what the Charter means in practice for community sector organisations. Provides a range of case studies on how community organisations are using the Charter in organisational policy, practice and procedure, as well as service delivery and advocacy.	Victorian Council of Social Service	<a href="http://www.vcoss.org.au/what-we-do/human-rights/UsingTheCharter/home.html">http://www.vcoss.org.au/what-we-do/human-rights/UsingTheCharter/home.html</a>
The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities – Civil and Political Rights Explained	Explores each of the substantive rights included in the Charter. Draws on examples from the UK to illustrate how human rights instruments can be used as an advocacy tool to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups outside the courtroom.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/CPRsexplainedLR.pdf">http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/CPRsexplainedLR.pdf</a>
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities – Brochures	Provides links to clear, easy-to-read, and printable brochures on human rights and responsibilities, including in several languages other than English.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/Publications/hr%20charter/">http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/Publications/hr%20charter/</a>
Principle to Practice: Implementing the Human Rights Based Approach in Community Organisations	Describes the key elements of the human rights based approach to working in community organisations, the practice case for adopting it, and tools and strategies for implementation.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.victorianhumanrightscommission.com/www/files/FromPrincipletoPractice.pdf">http://www.victorianhumanrightscommission.com/www/files/FromPrincipletoPractice.pdf</a>
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides the normative basis for all other human rights documentation.	The United Nations	<a href="http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/">http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/</a>
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Training Calendar	A calendar of workshops for the community sector, employers, and service providers that demystify human rights law and equip participants with knowledge and skills to apply in distinct areas of work.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/training">http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/training</a>



What's it called?	Why chase it up?	Where's it from?	The link
Everyday People Everyday Rights	Provides presentations and transcripts from the Human Rights Conference 2009 (Melbourne, Victoria).	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.humanrightsconference.com.au/">http://www.humanrightsconference.com.au/</a>
National Human Rights Consultation Website	Offers learning about the National Human Rights Consultation (2009), where ordinary Australians were invited to make submissions on their views of human rights in Australia.	Australian Government	<a href="http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/nhrcc.nsf">http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/nhrcc.nsf</a>
Guidelines for Local Laws Manual	Provides a comprehensive set of guidelines to assist Victorian local governments to achieve better practice when considering, making, implementing, enforcing and reviewing local laws.	Local Government Victoria	<a href="http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/Web20/rwpgslib.nsf/GraphicFiles/Local+Laws+Manual/\$file/Local+Laws+Manual.pdf">http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/Web20/rwpgslib.nsf/GraphicFiles/Local+Laws+Manual/\$file/Local+Laws+Manual.pdf</a>
The 2009 Report on the Operation of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities – Making Progress	The third annual report on the operation of the Charter throughout Victoria examines the growing impact of the Charter and reports on human rights and Charter-related initiatives undertaken by departments, Victoria Police, and local governments.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/publications/charter%20reports/">http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/publications/charter%20reports/</a>
Human Rights Passport	Offers a series of stories from everyday people throughout Victoria on what human rights mean to them. The document highlights how human rights relate to local life and local issues, and how to take action when human rights are not respected.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/human%20rights%20passport/">http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/human%20rights%20passport/</a>

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# Notes

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Notes



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Strengthening Democracy*



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