

26 November 2009

The Secretary
Advisory Group on Reform of Australian
Government Administration
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Canberra, ACT 2600.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Inquiry in to the Reform of Australian Government Administration

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Advisory
Group.

Much of the group's deliberations are beyond Liberty Victoria's
areas of concern. However, there are two matters of interest to
Liberty:

- (i) What should be included in a revised set of values
for the Australian Public Service (APS)?
- (ii) How can the APS become "citizen centred", in
particular how can it ensure that citizens with higher
needs can access government information and
services?

Liberty Victoria considers that answers to these questions can be found in the recent
National Human Rights Consultation Report
(<http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/nhrcc.nsf/Page/Report>), especially
recommendations 8 and 9 as follows:

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends as follows:

- *that the Federal Government develop a whole-of government framework for ensuring that human rights — based either on Australia's international obligations or on a federal Human Rights Act, or both — are better integrated into public sector policy and legislative development, decision making, service delivery, and practice more generally*
- *that the Federal Government nominate a Minister responsible for implementation and oversight of the framework and for annual reporting to parliament on the operation of the framework.*

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Federal Government incorporate human rights compliance in the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct.

**GPO Box 3161
Melbourne VIC 3001**

info@libertyvictoria.org.au
www.libertyvictoria.org.au

t 03 9670 6422

Reg No : A0026497L

PRESIDENT
Michael Pearce SC

VICE-PRESIDENTS
Jamie Gardiner
Anne O'Rourke
Prof Spencer Zifcak
Georgia King-Siem

SECRETARY
Jessie Taylor

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Agusia Kapitaniak

TREASURER
Timothy Warner

COMMITTEE
Rachel Ball
Julian Burnside AO QC
Hugh Crosthwaite
Judy Magassy
Dr Di Sisely
Marian Steele
Dr Larry Stillman
Evelyn Tadros
Brian Walters SC
Jonathan Wilkinson

Whether or not a federal Human Rights Act is enacted which would impose an obligation on the APS to respect and promote human rights, Liberty considers that the APS should seek to adopt a human rights culture.

In Victoria, s 38 of the Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 imposes such an obligation on the Victorian Public Service. This has been in force for almost two years. There is much anecdotal evidence that it is transforming the way public services are delivered to the most underprivileged and vulnerable in Victoria. It is very much to the credit of the Victorian Public Service that it has embraced its responsibilities under the Charter.

Liberty would expect a similar transformation in the APS if it adopted a human rights culture in the manner recommended by the Human Rights Consultation Report. Liberty therefore recommends that the Advisory Group adopt and propose the implementation of recommendations 8 and 9 from the Human Rights Consultation Report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Pearce', written in a cursive style.

Michael Pearce SC
President