

What are human rights?

Human rights are basic entitlements that we all need to live a dignified life - a life worthy of a human being. These rights are grouped under four conceptual headings: freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Building a culture of rights

A society with a culture of rights is one where people are aware of and actively exercise their rights and responsibilities.

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) was created by an act of parliament: the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. The Charter gives legal protection to fundamental human rights of all people in Victoria. The Charter is intended to inform policies, procedures and practices in the public sector. However, it does not give rise to a new and separate complaints mechanism. The Victorian Ombudsman can take complaints and investigate under the Charter.

The Charter requires that the state and local governments in Victoria and other Victorian public authorities comply with Charter rights. They are required to consider them when making laws or policies and when delivering services. In certain circumstances, some rights may be limited. However this must be necessary and reasonable and there must be clear reasons for the decision.

Find out more about human rights

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

For information and education about Victoria's Charter of Human Rights

Web: www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

General Information Line: 1300 891 848

Enquiry Line: 1300 292 153

TTY: 1300 289 621

Human Rights Law Centre

Doris's Story in this brochure has been drawn from a real life case. See the Human Rights Law Centre website for this and other Charter cases.

Web: www.hrlc.org.au

The Victorian Ombudsman

The Victorian Ombudsman can take complaints and investigate under Victoria's Charter of Human Rights.

Web: www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Telephone: 9613 6222 or toll free: 1800 806 314

TTY: 133 677 or 1300 555 727

Australian Human Rights Commission

Web: www.hreoc.gov.au

General Information Line: 02 9284 9600

Complaints: 1300 656 419

General legal help

For general legal information and legal help telephone Victoria Legal Aid

9269 0120 or 1800 677 402 (toll free)

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

For your closest community legal centre

www.communitylaw.org.au

The legal information contained in this publication is of a general nature and should not be relied on as a substitute for legal advice. To the best of our knowledge it was correct at the time of publication.

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Human Rights in daily life



Freedom

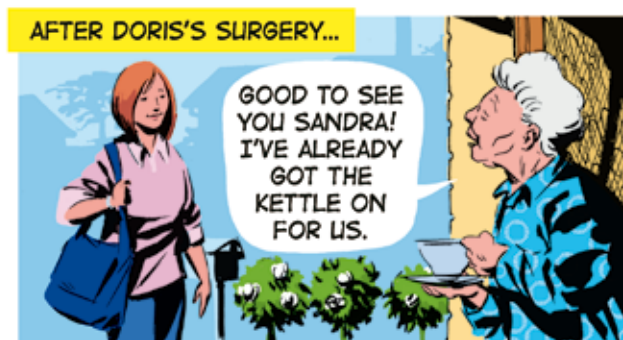
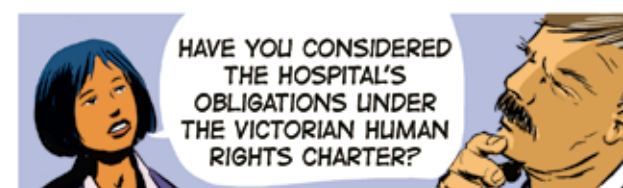
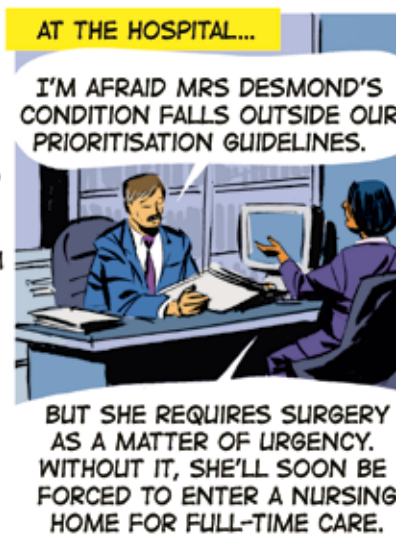
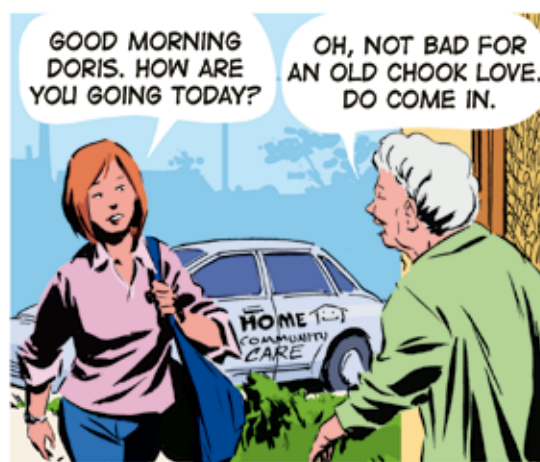
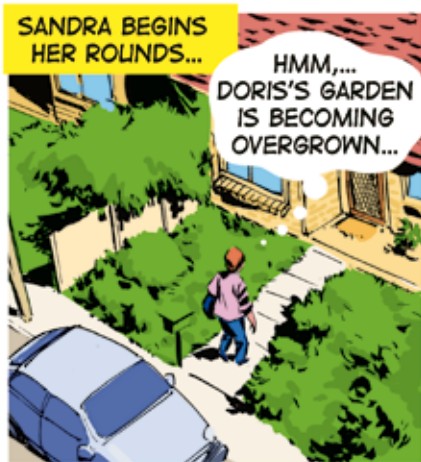
Respect

Equality

Dignity

Doris's Story

An example of how Victoria's Charter of Human Rights was used to promote Doris's human rights.



Advocating for human rights using the Charter

The public hospital in Doris's Story is one example of a Victorian public authority that is required to consider human rights in the delivery of its services. The workers use the Charter to argue for improved services for Doris that promote her human rights.

Some relevant human rights in Doris's Story include right to non-discrimination; protection from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; right to privacy; right to security of person.

How to use the Charter

Where possible, link the issue to specific human rights. Be clear about how you believe these rights are being affected and how you think responsibilities could be better met. Ask the following questions:

- What Charter rights are relevant?
- Whose rights are they?
- Are any rights being limited?
- Are the limitations reasonable?
- What could be done to better protect the person's rights?
- What steps can be taken to resolve the issues?