

# 2019 Charter Report: Highlights

## Key human rights issues of 2019

In 2019, Victoria progressed developments on the following issues through the courts, parliament and public authorities:

- Systemic racism and Aboriginal deaths in custody
- Gender equality and diversity
- Treaty and self-determination
- Racial and religious tolerance

Systemic racism and Aboriginal deaths in custody (Page 12)	Gender equality and diversity (page 16)	Treaty and self-determination (Page 18)	Racial and religious tolerance (Page 20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Charter informed the scope of the investigation into Tanya Day's death resulting in landmark findings of systemic racism</li> <li>• Commitment to decriminalise public drunkenness</li> <li>• Call to raise the age of criminal responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Equality Bill</li> <li>• Inclusive birth certificate reform</li> <li>• Victorian Government's LGBTIQ inclusive language guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocating for a legislated right to self-determination in the Victorian Charter</li> <li>• Education on how Charter rights apply to Aboriginal people to the Victorian justice sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria's first successful prosecution of serious vilification demonstrates that prohibiting hate conduct doesn't limit human rights under the Charter</li> </ul>



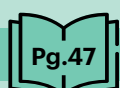
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## Building Charter competence in the public sector

Throughout 2019, the Commission continued to provide its suite of Charter e-learning modules to more than **800** public sector staff. Public authorities also engaged in face-to-face Charter education through the Commission's Charter Education Program. (Page 46)

More than **2,700** public sector staff took part in the Charter Education Program throughout the year.

The Commission delivered more than **160** face-to-face education sessions tailored to the work of teams. In the annual Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) People Matter Survey, **85%** of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "My workgroup values human rights" – a steady increase from **80%** in 2017.



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# Human rights in lawmaking

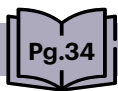
In 2019 the Victorian Parliament made significant progress towards protecting the human rights of Victorians. Our state led the nation by being the first jurisdiction to commit to a treaty process with Aboriginal peoples through legislation. The Parliament also passed its landmark gender equality law, aiming to promote and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women, and birth certificate laws which recognise that every Victorian – including those who are trans and gender diverse – should have the right to express their true identity free from discrimination.

## Legislative activity

67	Bills introduced into Parliament
76	SARC reports produced (including reports in relation to Bills introduced in 2018)
27	Questions about rights referred to a member or Minister by SARC
26	Responses received by SARC from a member or Minister
15	Public submissions made to SARC
0	Questions about rights referred to Parliament by SARC
0	Statements of partial incompatibility
0	Override declarations
1	House amendment to the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 resulting from SARC's commentary on the human rights raised.

**“Human rights matter because people matter. Because the ability to have a life in which you feel respected – where your dignity is maintained, where you can participate freely and equitably in society and the community, in the workplace, in your school – that matters.”**

Kristen Hilton, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner



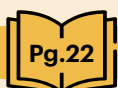
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# Human rights in courts and tribunals

In 2019 the Charter was raised or considered in more than 60 cases in Victorian courts and tribunals, and in the High Court of Australia. Litigation provides an important platform for individuals and groups to assert their human rights, obtain remedies and achieve more rights-compliant outcomes.

During 2019 there were some clear themes to human rights litigation:

- Systemic racism in policing and other public authorities.
- The extent to which it is lawful to limit speech that is harmful to particular groups, whether it's religious vilification or harassment of women attending abortion clinics.
- Prisoners' access to discretionary outcomes such as parole and emergency management days.



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