



Australian Capital Territory

# Human Rights Commission Act 2005

A2005-40

**Republication No 8**

**Effective: 27 October 2008 – 1 February 2009**

Republication date: 27 October 2008

Last amendment made by A2008-36  
(republication for amendments by A2008-20)

Not all amendments are in force: see last endnote

Authorised by the ACT Parliamentary Counsel

## About this republication

### The republished law

This is a republication of the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005* (including any amendment made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 (Editorial changes)) as in force on 27 October 2008. It also includes any amendment, repeal or expiry affecting the republished law to 27 October 2008.

The legislation history and amendment history of the republished law are set out in endnotes 3 and 4.

### Kinds of republications

The Parliamentary Counsel's Office prepares 2 kinds of republications of ACT laws (see the ACT legislation register at [www.legislation.act.gov.au](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au)):

- authorised republications to which the *Legislation Act 2001* applies
- unauthorised republications.

The status of this republication appears on the bottom of each page.

### Editorial changes

The *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 authorises the Parliamentary Counsel to make editorial amendments and other changes of a formal nature when preparing a law for republication. Editorial changes do not change the effect of the law, but have effect as if they had been made by an Act commencing on the republication date (see *Legislation Act 2001*, s 115 and s 117). The changes are made if the Parliamentary Counsel considers they are desirable to bring the law into line, or more closely into line, with current legislative drafting practice.

This republication does not include amendments made under part 11.3 (see endnote 1).

### Uncommenced provisions and amendments

If a provision of the republished law has not commenced or is affected by an uncommenced amendment, the symbol **U** appears immediately before the provision heading. The text of the uncommenced provision or amendment appears only in the last endnote.

### Modifications

If a provision of the republished law is affected by a current modification, the symbol **M** appears immediately before the provision heading. The text of the modifying provision appears in the endnotes. For the legal status of modifications, see *Legislation Act 2001*, section 95.

### Penalties

The value of a penalty unit for an offence against this republished law at the republication date is—

- (a) if the person charged is an individual—\$100; or
- (b) if the person charged is a corporation—\$500.



Australian Capital Territory

# Human Rights Commission Act 2005

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Australian Capital Territory

# Human Rights Commission Act 2005

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An Act to establish the Human Rights Commission, and for other purposes

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## Part 1 Preliminary

### 1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005*.

### 3 Dictionary

The dictionary at the end of this Act is part of this Act.

*Note 1* The dictionary at the end of this Act defines certain terms used in this Act, and includes references (*signpost definitions*) to other terms defined elsewhere.

For example, the signpost definition '*health professional*—see the *Health Professionals Act 2004*, section 14.' means that the term 'health professional' is defined in that section and the definition applies to this Act.

*Note 2* A definition in the dictionary (including a signpost definition) applies to the entire Act unless the definition, or another provision of the Act, provides otherwise or the contrary intention otherwise appears (see Legislation Act, s 155 and s 156 (1)).

### 4 Notes

A note included in this Act is explanatory and is not part of this Act.

*Note* See the Legislation Act, s 127 (1), (4) and (5) for the legal status of notes.

## 5 Offences against Act—application of Criminal Code etc

Other legislation applies in relation to offences against this Act.

*Note 1 Criminal Code*

The Criminal Code, ch 2 applies to all offences against this Act (see Code, pt 2.1).

The chapter sets out the general principles of criminal responsibility (including burdens of proof and general defences), and defines terms used for offences to which the Code applies (eg *conduct*, *intention*, *recklessness* and *strict liability*).

*Note 2 Penalty units*

The Legislation Act, s 133 deals with the meaning of offence penalties that are expressed in penalty units.

## Part 2 Objects and important concepts

### 6 Main objects of Act

- (1) The main object of the Act is to promote the human rights and welfare of people living in the ACT.
- (2) The main object is to be achieved by establishing a commission that will—
  - (a) promote the provision of community education, information and advice in relation to human rights; and
  - (b) identify and examine issues that affect the human rights and welfare of vulnerable groups in the community; and
  - (c) make recommendations to government and non-government agencies on legislation, policies, practices and services that affect vulnerable groups in the community; and
  - (d) promote understanding and acceptance of, and compliance with, the *Discrimination Act 1991* and the *Human Rights Act 2004*; and
  - (e) promote improvements in the provision of disability services, health services, services for children and young people and services for older people; and
  - (f) promote the rights of users of disability services, health services, services for children and young people and services for older people; and
  - (g) promote an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of users and providers of services to which this Act relates; and
  - (h) provide an independent, fair and accessible process for the resolution of discrimination complaints and complaints between users and providers of disability services, health

services, services for children and young people and services for older people; and

- (i) provide a process to encourage and assist users and providers of disability services, health services, services for children and young people, and services for older people, to make improvements in the provision of services, particularly by encouraging and assisting service users and providers to contribute to the review and improvement of service quality; and
- (j) foster community discussion, and the provision of community education and information, about—
  - (i) this Act and related Acts; and
  - (ii) the operation of the commission; and
  - (iii) the procedures for making complaints.

## **7 What is a *health service*?**

- (1) For this Act, a *health service* is a service provided in the ACT to someone (the *service user*) for any of the following purposes:
  - (a) assessing, recording, maintaining or improving the physical, mental or emotional health, comfort or wellbeing of the service user;
  - (b) diagnosing or treating an illness, disability, disorder or condition of the service user.
- (2) In applying this Act in relation to a health professional who is a veterinary surgeon, a *health service* is a service provided to an animal (the *service user*) for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) (a) or (b).
- (3) A *health service* includes—
  - (a) a service provided by a health professional in the professional's capacity as a health professional; and

- (b) a service provided specifically for carers of people receiving health services or carers of people with physical or mental conditions.

## 8 What is a *disability service*?

- (1) A *disability service* is a service provided in the ACT specifically for people with a disability or their carers.

### Examples of services for people with a disability or their carers

- 1 a service that provides home help, personal care, home maintenance or modification, food services, respite care, transport, assessment or referral of support needs, education, training and skill development, information services, coordination, case management and brokerage, recreation, advocacy, community access, accommodation support, rehabilitation, or employment services, specifically for people with a disability or their carers
- 2 a service provided in association with the use of premises for the care, treatment or accommodation of people with a disability

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (2) In this section:

*disability* means a disability that—

- (a) is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment, or a combination of those impairments; and
- (b) is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- (c) results in—
  - (i) the person having a substantially reduced capacity for communication, learning or mobility; and

(ii) the need for continuing support services for the person;  
and

(d) may, but need not, be of a chronic episodic nature.

*Note* *Disability* is defined differently for complaints about discrimination on the grounds of disability (see *Discrimination Act 1991*, s 5AA).

## **8A What is a service for children and young people?**

A *service for children and young people* is a service provided in the ACT specifically for children, young people, both children and young people, or their carers.

### **Examples of services for children and young people and their carers**

- 1 a service that provides care, respite care, transport, assessment or referral of support needs, education, training and skill development, information services, coordination, food services, case management and brokerage, recreation, advocacy, community access, accommodation support, rehabilitation or employment services specifically for children, young people, or their carers
- 2 a service provided in relation to the use of premises for the care, treatment or accommodation of children, young people, or their carers
- 3 a service provided in relation to a detention place, therapeutic protection place or place of care under the *Children and Young People Act 2008*

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

## **9 What is a service for older people?**

A *service for older people* is a service provided in the ACT specifically for older people or their carers.

### **Examples of services for older people**

- 1 a service that provides home help, personal care, home maintenance or modification, food services, respite care, transport, assessment or referral of support needs, education, training and skill development, information services, coordination, case management and brokerage, recreation, advocacy, community access, accommodation support, rehabilitation, or employment services, specifically for older people or their carers

- 2 a service provided in association with the use of premises for the care, treatment or accommodation of older people.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

## 10 Who is a *provider*?

- (1) For this Act, a *provider* of a service is an entity that provides, or holds out that it can provide, the service.
- (2) A *provider* of a service includes—
  - (a) an entity that employs someone who—
    - (i) provides the service; or
    - (ii) holds out that the person can provide the service; and
  - (b) a volunteer providing the service on behalf of someone else; and
  - (c) someone who was a provider when the service was provided, but is no longer providing the service.
- (3) However, a funding body does not provide a service only because the body pays for the service to be provided by someone else.





people, and services for older people, to make improvements in the provision of services, particularly by encouraging and assisting service users and providers to contribute to the review and improvement of service quality;

- (c) encouraging and assisting people providing disability services, health services, services for children and young people and services for older people, and people engaging in conduct that may be complained about under this Act, to develop and improve procedures for dealing with complaints;
- (d) promoting community discussion, and providing community education and information, about—
  - (i) this Act and related Acts; and
  - (ii) the operation of the commission; and
  - (iii) the procedures for making complaints;
- (e) identifying, inquiring into and reviewing issues relating to the matters that may be complained about under this Act;
- (f) reporting to the Minister, and other appropriate entities, about each inquiry and review mentioned in paragraph (e) or advising the Minister and other appropriate entities about the inquiry and review;

*Note* The commission may make a report to other appropriate entities by a third-party report.

- (g) referring to the public advocate under section 51A advocacy matters about individual children or young people for whom the chief executive under the *Children and Young People Act 2008* has parental responsibility;
- (h) advising the Minister about any matter in relation to this Act or a related Act;
- (i) collecting information about the operation of this Act and related Acts, and publishing the information;

- (j) exercising any other function given to the commission under this Act or another Territory law.

*Note* The following Acts give the commission functions:

- *Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Health Professionals Act 2004*
- *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*
- *Human Rights Act 2004*.

- (2) To remove any doubt, the Minister may, but need not, present advice mentioned in subsection (1) (f) to the Legislative Assembly.

*Note* A report under s 87 must be presented to the Legislative Assembly.

## **15 Functions and human rights**

The commission must act in accordance with the human rights under the *Human Rights Act 2004* when exercising a function under this Act or a related Act.

## **16 Independence of commission**

The commission is not subject to the direction of anyone else in relation to the exercise of a function under this Act or a related Act, subject to section 17.

## **17 Minister's directions**

- (1) The Minister may, in writing, direct the commission to inquire into and report to the Minister in relation to a matter that can be complained about under this Act.
- (2) The commission must comply with the direction.

## Division 3.3            Children and young people                                  commissioner

### 19A            Appointment of children and young people commissioner

- (1) The Executive must appoint a person to be the Children and Young People Commissioner.

*Note 1*    For the making of appointments (including acting appointments), see the Legislation Act, pt 19.3.

*Note 2*    In particular, an appointment may be made by naming a person or nominating the occupant of a position (see s 207).

- (2) However, the Executive must not appoint a person as children and young people commissioner unless satisfied that the person has the experience or expertise necessary to exercise the functions of the commissioner.
- (3) The children and young people commissioner must not be appointed for a term of longer than 5 years.

*Note*       A person may be reappointed to a position if the person is eligible to be appointed to the position (see Legislation Act, s 208 and dict, pt 1, def *appoint*).

- (4) The conditions of appointment of the children and young people commissioner are the conditions agreed between the Executive and the commissioner, subject to any determination under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*.

*Note*       The children and young people commissioner's appointment may be ended under s 29.

### 19B            Children and young people commissioner's functions

- (1) The children and young people commissioner has the following functions:
- (a) to exercise functions for the commission in relation to services for children and young people;

- (b) to exercise any other function given to the commissioner under this Act or any other territory law.
- (2) The exercise of the function mentioned in subsection (1) (a) is subject to any decision of the commission about the exercise of its functions in relation to services for children and young people.
- (3) In exercising the children and young people commissioner's functions, the commissioner must endeavour to—
  - (a) consult with children and young people in ways that promote their participation in decision-making; and
  - (b) listen to and seriously consider the views of children and young people; and
  - (c) ensure that the commission is accessible to children and young people; and
  - (d) be sensitive to the linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds of children and young people.

**19BA Delegation of children and young people commissioner's functions**

The children and young people commissioner may delegate the commissioner's functions under this Act or another Territory law to another commissioner or a member of the staff of the commission.

*Note* For the making of delegations and the exercise of delegated functions, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.4.

**19C Advisory committees for services for children and young people**

- (1) The commission may establish advisory committees to assist the commission to exercise its functions in relation to services for children and young people.
- (2) Without limiting the people who may be appointed to an advisory committee, the commission may appoint children and young people,

and people with experience or expertise in relation to services for children and young people, to the committee.

## **Division 3.4            Disability and community services commissioner**

### **20            Appointment of disability and community services commissioner**

- (1) The Executive must appoint a person to be the Disability and Community Services Commissioner.

*Note 1*    For the making of appointments (including acting appointments), see the Legislation Act, pt 19.3.

*Note 2*    In particular, an appointment may be made by naming a person or nominating the occupant of a position (see s 207).

- (2) However, the Executive must not appoint a person as disability and community services commissioner unless satisfied that the person has the experience or expertise necessary to exercise the functions of the commissioner.

- (3) The disability and community services commissioner must not be appointed for a term of longer than 5 years.

*Note*      A person may be reappointed to a position if the person is eligible to be appointed to the position (see Legislation Act, s 208 and dict, pt 1, def *appoint*).

- (4) The conditions of appointment of the disability and community services commissioner are the conditions agreed between the Executive and the commissioner, subject to any determination under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*.

*Note*      The disability and community services commissioner's appointment may be ended under s 29.

**21 Disability and community services commissioner's functions**

- (1) The disability and community services commissioner has the following functions:
  - (a) to exercise functions for the commission in relation to disability services;
  - (b) to exercise any other function given to the commissioner under this Act or any other territory law.
- (2) The exercise of the function mentioned in subsection (1) (a) is subject to any decision of the commission about the exercise of its functions in relation to disability services.

**21A Delegation of disability and community services commissioner's functions**

The disability and community services commissioner may delegate the commissioner's functions under this Act or another Territory law to another commissioner or a member of the staff of the commission.

*Note* For the making of delegations and the exercise of delegated functions, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.4.

**Division 3.5 Discrimination commissioner**

**22 Appointment of discrimination commissioner**

- (1) The Executive must appoint a person to be the Discrimination Commissioner.

*Note 1* For the making of appointments (including acting appointments), see the Legislation Act, pt 19.3.

*Note 2* In particular, an appointment may be made by naming a person or nominating the occupant of a position (see s 207).

- (2) However, the Executive must not appoint a person as discrimination commissioner unless satisfied that the person has the experience or expertise necessary to exercise the functions of the commissioner.
- (3) The discrimination commissioner must not be appointed for a term of longer than 5 years.

*Note*        A person may be reappointed to a position if the person is eligible to be appointed to the position (see Legislation Act, s 208 and dict, pt 1, def *appoint*).

- (4) The conditions of appointment of the discrimination commissioner are the conditions agreed between the Executive and the commissioner, subject to any determination under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*.

*Note*        The discrimination commissioner's appointment may be ended under s 29.

## **23                    Discrimination commissioner's functions**

- (1) The discrimination commissioner has the following functions:
  - (a) to exercise functions for the commission in relation to discrimination;
  - (b) to exercise any other function given to the commission under this Act or another territory law.
- (2) The functions of the commission in relation to discrimination include the following:
  - (a) to promote the right of people to be free from unlawful discrimination in—
    - (i) the areas of work, education and access to premises;
    - (ii) the provision of goods, services, facilities and accommodation; and
    - (iii) the activities of clubs;



- (b) to promote the right of people to be free from sexual harassment in—
    - (i) the areas of work, education and access to premises; and
    - (ii) the provision of goods, services, facilities and accommodation; and
    - (iii) the activities of clubs;
  - (c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the equality of men and women;
  - (d) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle of equality of opportunity for all people.
- (3) The exercise of the function mentioned in subsection (1) (a) is subject to any decision of the commission about the exercise of its functions in relation to discrimination.
- (4) A term used in subsection (2) has the same meaning as in the *Discrimination Act 1991*.

### **23A Delegation of discrimination commissioner's functions**

The discrimination commissioner may delegate the commissioner's functions under this Act or another Territory law to another commissioner or a member of the staff of the commission.

*Note* For the making of delegations and the exercise of delegated functions, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.4.

## Division 3.6            Health services commissioner

### 24            Appointment of health services commissioner

- (1) The Executive must appoint a person to be the Health Services Commissioner.

*Note 1*    For the making of appointments (including acting appointments), see the Legislation Act, pt 19.3.

*Note 2*    In particular, an appointment may be made by naming a person or nominating the occupant of a position (see s 207).

- (2) However, the Executive must not appoint a person as health services commissioner unless satisfied that the person has the experience or expertise necessary to exercise the functions of the commissioner.
- (3) The health services commissioner must not be appointed for a term of longer than 5 years.

*Note*      A person may be reappointed to a position if the person is eligible to be appointed to the position (see Legislation Act, s 208 and dict, pt 1, def *appoint*).

- (4) The conditions of appointment of the health services commissioner are the conditions agreed between the Executive and the commissioner, subject to any determination under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*.

*Note*      The health services commissioner's appointment may be ended under s 29.

### 25            Health services commissioner's functions

- (1) The health services commissioner has the following functions:
  - (a) to exercise functions for the commission in relation to health services and services for older people;
  - (b) to exercise any other function given to the commissioner under this Act or any other territory law.

- (2) The exercise of the function mentioned in subsection (1) (a) is subject to any decision of the commission about the exercise of its functions in relation to health services and services for older people.

### **25A Delegation of health services commissioner's functions**

The health services commissioner may delegate the commissioner's functions under this Act or another Territory law to another commissioner or a member of the staff of the commission.

*Note* For the making of delegations and the exercise of delegated functions, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.4.

## **Division 3.7 Human rights commissioner**

### **26 Appointment of human rights commissioner**

- (1) The Executive must appoint a person to be the Human Rights Commissioner.

*Note 1* For the making of appointments (including acting appointments), see the Legislation Act, pt 19.3.

*Note 2* In particular, an appointment may be made by naming a person or nominating the occupant of a position (see s 207).

- (2) However, the Executive must not appoint a person as human rights commissioner unless satisfied that the person has the experience or expertise necessary to exercise the functions of the commissioner.
- (3) The human rights commissioner must not be appointed for a term of longer than 5 years.

*Note* A person may be reappointed to a position if the person is eligible to be appointed to the position (see Legislation Act, s 208 and dict, pt 1, def *appoint*).

- (4) The conditions of appointment of the human rights commissioner are the conditions agreed between the Executive and the commissioner, subject to any determination under the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*.

*Note* The human rights commissioner's appointment may be ended under s 29.

## **27 Human rights commissioner's functions**

- (1) The human rights commissioner has the following functions:
- (a) to exercise functions for the commission in relation to human rights;
  - (b) to exercise any other function given to the commissioner under this Act or any other territory law.
- (2) The functions of the commission in relation to human rights include the following:
- (a) to provide education about human rights and the *Human Rights Act 2004*; and
  - (b) to advise the Attorney-General on anything relevant to the operation of the *Human Rights Act 2004*.
- (3) The exercise of the function mentioned in subsection (1) (a) is subject to any decision of the commission about the exercise of its functions in relation to human rights.

## **27A Delegation of human rights commissioner's functions**

The human rights commissioner may delegate the commissioner's functions under this Act or another Territory law to another commissioner or a member of the staff of the commission.

*Note* For the making of delegations and the exercise of delegated functions, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.4.

## **Division 3.8                      Ending appointments**

### **28                      Application—div 3.8**

This division applies to each of the following positions:

- (a) the children and young people commissioner;
- (b) the disability and community services commissioner;
- (c) the discrimination commissioner;
- (d) the health services commissioner;
- (e) the human rights commissioner.

### **29                      Ending appointments**

- (1) The Executive may end the appointment of a person to a position to which this division applies—
  - (a) if the person contravenes a territory law; or
  - (b) for misbehaviour; or
  - (c) if the person becomes bankrupt or executes a personal insolvency agreement; or
  - (d) if the person is convicted, in the ACT, of an offence punishable by imprisonment for at least 1 year; or
  - (e) if the person is convicted outside the ACT, in Australia or elsewhere, of an offence that, if it had been committed in the ACT, would be punishable by imprisonment for at least 1 year.
- (2) The Executive must end the person's appointment—
  - (a) if the person is absent, other than on leave approved by the Minister, for 14 consecutive days or for 28 days in any 12-month period; or

- (b) for physical or mental incapacity, if the incapacity substantially affects the exercise of the person's functions.

*Note*      A person's appointment also ends if the person resigns (see Legislation Act, s 210).

## **Division 3.9                      Commission procedures**

### **30                      Time and place of commission meetings**

- (1) Meetings of the commission are to be held when and where it decides.
- (2) However, the commission must meet at least once each month.
- (3) Any member may, with the agreement of at least 1 other member, call a meeting of the commission.
- (4) A member who calls a meeting under subsection (3) must give the other members reasonable notice of the time and place of the meeting.

### **32                      Quorum at meetings**

Business may be carried on at a meeting of the commission only if at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  the members of the commission are present.

### **33                      Voting at meetings**

At a meeting of the commission each member has a vote on each question to be decided.

### **34                      Individual with more than 1 role**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a person holds 2 or more positions under this Act; and

- (b) the person is a member of the commission because of each of the positions.

**Example**

The discrimination commissioner may be appointed to be the human rights commissioner.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (2) The person is only entitled to 1 vote at commission meetings.
- (3) In working out whether  $\frac{1}{2}$  the members are present at a meeting for section 32 (Quorum at meetings), the number of members is taken to be the number of individuals who are members.

**Example**

If the discrimination commissioner is also the human rights commissioner, the number of members is taken to be 4. Therefore, 2 members (rather than 3) would need to be present at a meeting to carry on business.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

## **35 Conduct of meetings etc**

- (1) A meeting may be held using a method of communication, or a combination of methods of communication, that allows a commission member taking part to hear what each other member taking part says without the members being in each other's presence.

**Examples**

a phone link, a satellite link, an internet or intranet link

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (2) A commission member who takes part in a meeting conducted under subsection (1) is taken, for all purposes, to be present at the meeting.

- (3) A resolution is a valid resolution of the commission, even if it is not passed at a meeting of the commission, if—
  - (a) notice of the resolution is given under procedures decided by the commission; and
  - (b) all members agree, in writing, to the proposed resolution.
- (4) The commission must keep minutes of its meetings.

### **Division 3.10            Staff and consultants of commission**

#### **36            Staff of commission**

The commission staff must be employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

#### **37            Consultants of commission**

- (1) The commission may engage consultants for this Act.
- (2) Consultants are to be engaged on terms decided by the commission.
- (3) However, this section does not give the commission a power to enter into a contract of employment.



## **Part 4**                      **Complaints**

### **Division 4.1**                **Making complaints**

#### **38**                      **Outline—div 4.1**

This division sets out the complaints that may be made under this Act, who can complain and how.

#### **39**                      **When may someone complain about a health service?**

- (1) A person may complain to the commission about a health service if—
- (a) the service is not being provided appropriately; or
  - (b) the person believes that the provider of the service has acted inconsistently with any of the following:
    - (i) the health code;
    - (ii) if there is no health code—the health provision principles;
    - (iii) a generally accepted standard of health service delivery expected of providers of the same kind as the provider;
    - (iv) any standard of practice applying to the provider under the *Health Professionals Act 2004*;
    - (v) the National Standards for Mental Health Services endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council’s National Mental Health Working Group, as amended from time to time;
    - (vi) any other standard prescribed by regulation; or
  - (c) the service is not being provided.

(2) In this section:

*health provision principles*—see section 90 (2).

#### **40           When may someone complain about a disability service?**

A person may complain to the commission about a disability service if—

- (a) the service is not being provided appropriately; or
- (b) the person believes that the provider of the service has acted inconsistently with any of the following:
  - (i) the Home and Community Care National Service Standards, as amended from time to time;
  - (ii) the human rights principles set out in the *Disability Services Act 1991*, schedule 1;
  - (iii) the requirements to be complied with in relation to the design and implementation of programs and services relating to people with disabilities set out in the *Disability Services Act 1991*, schedule 2;
  - (iv) the National Standards for Mental Health Services endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council's National Mental Health Working Group, as amended from time to time;
  - (v) the generally accepted standard of service delivery expected of a provider of the kind of service to which the complaint relates;
  - (vi) any other standard prescribed by regulation; or

- (c) the service is not being provided.

*Note* For the availability and the appropriate version of the standards mentioned in par (b) (i) and (iv), see s 96 (Inspection of incorporated documents) and s 97 (Notification of certain incorporated documents) (see also dict, def *incorporated document*).

**40A**      **When may someone complain about a service for children and young people?**

A person may complain to the commission about a service for children and young people if—

- (a) the service is not being provided appropriately; or
- (b) the provider of the service has acted inconsistently with any of the following:
  - (i) the generally accepted standard of service delivery expected of a provider of the kind of service to which the complaint relates;
  - (ii) any other standard prescribed by regulation; or
- (c) the service is not being provided.

**41**      **When may someone complain about a service for older people?**

A person may complain to the commission about a service for older people if—

- (a) the service is not being provided appropriately; or
- (b) the provider of the service has acted inconsistently with any of the following:
  - (i) the Home and Community Care National Service Standards, as amended from time to time;

- (ii) the generally accepted standard of service delivery expected of a provider of the kind of service to which the complaint relates;
  - (iii) any other standard prescribed by regulation; or
- (c) the service is not being provided.

#### **42           What complaints may be made under this Act?**

- (1) The following complaints may be made under this Act:
- (a) a children and young people service complaint;
  - (b) a disability service complaint;
  - (c) a complaint (a *discrimination complaint*) about an unlawful act under the *Discrimination Act 1991*, part 3 (Unlawful discrimination), part 5 (Sexual harassment), section 66 (Unlawful vilification—race, sexuality etc) or part 7 (Other unlawful acts);
  - (d) a health service complaint;
  - (e) an older people service complaint;
  - (f) a complaint on a ground mentioned in the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*, section 18.

*Note 1* A health professional report is dealt with by way of commission-initiated consideration (see s 94 (2)).

*Note 2* The commission may also consider matters that have not been raised by complaints under div 3.5 (see s 48).

- (2) To remove any doubt, a complaint that may be made under this Act is made under this division.

**43 Who may make a complaint under this Act?**

- (1) A complaint about an act or service may be made to the commission under this Act by—
- (a) a person (the *aggrieved person*) aggrieved by the act or service; or
  - (b) an agent of the aggrieved person; or
  - (c) if the aggrieved person is a child or young person—a parent or guardian of the aggrieved person; or
  - (d) if a person has guardianship or control of the affairs of the aggrieved person under another law or an order of a court or tribunal—that person; or
  - (e) if the aggrieved person cannot complain for any reason and no-one has guardianship or control of the aggrieved person's affairs under another law or an order of a court or tribunal—a person approved by the commission to make a complaint for the aggrieved person; or
  - (f) if the complaint is a health service complaint, disability service complaint or older people service complaint—anyone.
- Note* If a complaint is made under par (f) by a person who could not otherwise complain under another paragraph, the commission may conduct a commission-initiated consideration into the matters raised by the complaint (see s 48 (2)).
- (2) To remove any doubt—
- (a) no-one may be required to make a complaint; and
  - (b) an aggrieved person may make a complaint under subsection (1) (a) even though the person is under a legal disability (for example, if a child is aggrieved, the child may make a complaint); and

*Note*     An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (c) if a complaint is made under subsection (1) (f)—the complainant cannot require the complaint to be considered.
- (3) To remove any doubt, a carer may make a complaint as an agent of the aggrieved person under subsection (1) (b) even though the carer is under a legal disability (for example, if a child is a carer of the aggrieved person, the child may make a complaint as an agent of the person).
- (4) A person may act as the agent of the aggrieved person only if the person is—
- (a) authorised in writing to act for the aggrieved person; or
  - (b) authorised by the commission to act for the aggrieved person.
- (5) The commission may authorise a person to act as the agent of the aggrieved person only if the commission is satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that the aggrieved person cannot for any reason make a complaint or authorise a person to make a complaint for the aggrieved person.
- (6) A single complaint may be made by or for 2 or more aggrieved people.

#### **44           Complaint to be in writing**

- (1) A complaint must—
- (a) be in writing; and
  - (b) if the complaint is made by an agent—state that it is made for an aggrieved person and name the aggrieved person; and
  - (c) state the complaint and the grounds on which it is based; and
  - (d) include the name and address of the complainant.

- (2) However, a person is entitled to reasonable assistance from the commission to put the complaint into writing.

**Examples of when assistance would be reasonable**

- 1 if the person cannot put the complaint in writing
- 2 if the person has difficulty putting the complaint in writing

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

**45 Commission's obligation to be prompt and efficient**

- (1) The commission must deal with complaints promptly and efficiently.
- (2) In particular, the commission must—
  - (a) allocate each complaint as soon as possible; and
  - (b) if the commission decides to consider the complaint by a commission-initiated consideration under section 48 (2)—tell the person who made the complaint, in writing, about the decision and that the person will not receive progress reports about the consideration; and
  - (c) unless section 45 (4) applies—before considering the complaint, tell the complainant and the person complained about, in writing, that the complaint is to be considered; and
  - (d) if the complaint is a discrimination complaint and the commission decides not to refer the complaint for conciliation—tell the complainant, in writing, that the complaint will not be referred for conciliation and include a discrimination referral statement with the notice; and
  - (e) tell the complainant, in writing, how consideration of the complaint by the commission is progressing not later than 6 weeks after the last time the commission told the complainant, in writing, about the complaint's progress; and

- (f) if the complaint is closed for any reason—tell the complainant and the person complained about, in writing, that the complaint has been closed within 4 weeks after the day the complaint is closed.

**Example for par (e)**

The commission tells a complainant, in writing, that his complaint has been allocated to a particular commissioner on 30 June. On 28 July the commission tells the complainant, in writing, that the complaint is being referred to conciliation and the conciliation will take place on 15 August. The commission is not required to tell the complainant anything further until 6 weeks after 28 July.

*Note*     An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (3) However, the commission need not consider a complaint if satisfied that—
- (a) the complaint—
- (i) is frivolous, vexatious or not made honestly; or
  - (ii) lacks substance; or
  - (iii) is to be referred to another statutory officer-holder; or
  - (iv) cannot be made by the complainant under the Act; or
  - (v) cannot otherwise be made under the Act; or
- (b) the complainant has been given a reasonable explanation and the complaint needs no further action by the commission; or
- (c) the matters raised by the complaint have been, or are being, dealt with by a court or tribunal or have been dealt with by the commission.
- (4) Also, the commission need not give notice under subsection (2) to the person complained of if, because of subsection (3), it decides—
- (a) not to consider the complaint; or



- (b) not to consider the complaint further.

**46 Complainant's obligations in relation to complaint**

The complainant for a complaint must—

- (a) keep the commission informed of any change in the complainant's name or address while the commission is dealing with the complaint; and
- (b) if the commission requires the complainant under section 73 to provide further information, or produce any document or thing—provide the further information, or produce the document or thing, as required; and
- (c) if the commission requires the complainant under section 74 to attend before a person to answer questions—attend before the person, and answer questions, as required.

*Note 1* A complaint may be closed if the complainant does not comply with a requirement under s 73 or s 74 (see s 78 (1) (c) or (d)).

*Note 2* If the commission requires a person other than the complainant or aggrieved person (eg the person complained about) to provide information, produce a document or thing or attend to answer questions, the person commits an offence if the person does not comply with the requirement (see s 73 and s 74).

## Division 4.2                   Dealing with complaints

### *Note to div 4.2*

The commission must close certain complaints. For example, the commission must close a complaint that is frivolous or vexatious, or a complaint that has been or is being dealt with by a court or tribunal (see s 78 (2), esp par (c) (ii) and (iii)).

### **U 47                   Outline—div 4.2**

- (1) This division sets out how the commission deals with the complaints it receives.
- (2) In summary, complaints may, but need not, go through the following steps:
  - (a) allocation;
  - (b) consideration;
  - (c) conciliation;
  - (d) closure;
  - (e) reporting.
- (3) Complaints need not go through the steps mentioned in subsection (2) in the order they appear in that subsection.
- (4) Also, a complaint may be referred to another entity under section 53A (Referral to appropriate statutory office-holder).

### **U 48                   Consideration without complaint or appropriate complainant**

- (1) The commission may, on its own initiative, consider (by a *commission-initiated consideration*)—
  - (a) an act or service that appears to the commission to be an act or service about which a person could make, but has not made, a complaint under this Act; or

(b) any other matter related to the commission's functions.

**Examples**

The commission may consider an issue of public interest or public safety that relates to its functions.

*Note 1* A health professional report may also be dealt with by commission-initiated consideration (see s 94).

*Note 2* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

(2) The commission may, on its own initiative, also consider (by a ***commission-initiated consideration***) a complaint that is a children and young people service complaint, disability service complaint, health service complaint or older people service complaint, if—

- (a) the person who made the complaint could not have made the complaint under section 43 (1) (a) to (d); and
- (b) the commission does not approve the person under section 43 (1) (e) to make the complaint for the aggrieved person.

*Note* Under s 43 (1) (a) to (e), complaints may be made by an aggrieved person, an agent of an aggrieved person, a parent or guardian of an aggrieved person who is a child or young person, a person with guardianship or control of an aggrieved person or a person approved by the commission to make the complaint on an aggrieved person's behalf.

(3) Without limiting when the commission may consider a matter by a commission-initiated consideration, the commission may consider a complaint by a commission-initiated consideration if—

- (a) the complainant has withdrawn the complaint for any reason; but

- (b) the commission is satisfied that it is in the public interest to consider the complaint.

**Examples of when it may be in the public interest to consider withdrawn complaint**

- 1 The complaint appears to reveal a systemic problem about an activity or a service.
  - 2 The complaint, if substantiated, raises a significant issue for the ACT, or an issue of public safety.
  - 3 It may be possible for action in relation to the complaint to be taken under another Act if the complaint is substantiated by, for example, reporting a health professional to a health profession board or referring a complaint to the discrimination tribunal.
- (4) A commission-initiated consideration must, as far as practicable, be conducted as if it were a consideration of a complaint.

*Note*     The commission is the complainant for a commission-initiated consideration (see dict, def *complainant*).

**49                   Treatment of complaint if complaint dealt with as commission-initiated consideration**

- (1) This section applies if the commission decides to consider a complaint by commission-initiated consideration under section 48 (2).
- (2) The person who made the complaint stops being the complainant and the commission becomes the complainant.
- (3) However, the commission continues to have the same obligations under section 45 (2) (f) in relation to the person as the commission would have if the person were the complainant, but must not give the person information about the aggrieved person or the person complained about.

*Note*     Under s 80 (3) the commission need not give the person a final report in relation to the complaint.

## **50 Allocating complaints**

The commission allocates a complaint by deciding which commissioner will be responsible for considering the complaint under division 4.4 for the commission.

### **Example**

The commission may decide that the disability and community services commissioner and the discrimination commissioner will jointly consider a complaint about services provided discriminatively in relation to a person with a disability.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

## **51 Referring complaints for conciliation**

- (1) The commission may, at any time, refer a complaint, or matter that forms part of a complaint, for conciliation if satisfied that—
  - (a) the complaint or matter is likely to be successfully conciliated; and
  - (b) the matter is appropriate for conciliation.

*Note* Conciliation is dealt with in div 4.3.

- (2) The commission may continue to consider a complaint that has been referred, or part of which has been referred, for conciliation.

## **51A Referral of advocacy matters**

- (1) This section applies to a children and young people complaint if—
  - (a) the complaint relates to a child or young person; and
  - (b) the chief executive under the *Children and Young People Act 2008* has parental responsibility for the child or young person.

- (2) The commission may, at any time, refer the complaint, or a matter that forms part of the complaint, to the public advocate for advocacy if satisfied that—
  - (a) it is in the best interests of the child or young person that the complaint or matter be referred for advocacy; and
  - (b) the complaint or matter is appropriate for advocacy by the public advocate.
- (2) The commission may continue to consider a complaint that has been referred, or part of which has been referred, for advocacy.

## **52 Considering complaints**

- (1) The commissioner given responsibility for considering a complaint for the commission must consider the complaint.
- (2) The commissioner may, but need not, continue to consider the complaint while the complaint is being conciliated.

## **U Division 4.2A Discrimination complaints to ACAT**

### **U 53 Referral of discrimination complaints**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) either—
    - (i) a complainant is given a discrimination referral statement under section 45 (2) (d) or section 64; or
    - (ii) a statement under section 82 (1) is included in a final report in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) the complainant requires the commission to refer the complaint to the discrimination tribunal.
- (2) The commission must—
  - (a) refer the complaint to the discrimination tribunal; and

- (b) tell the complainant and the person complained about in writing about the referral.

*Note* The complaint must also be closed (see s 78 (2) (d)).

**U 53A Referral to appropriate statutory office-holder**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) the commission considers that the act or service to which a complaint relates is a matter that could—
    - (i) have been complained about to a statutory office-holder; and
    - (ii) be dealt with more conveniently or effectively by the statutory office-holder; and
  - (b) the commission considers it would be appropriate for the complaint to be referred to the statutory office-holder; and
  - (c) the commission has consulted the statutory office-holder about the referral.
- (2) The commission may—
  - (a) decide not to deal with, or further deal with, the complaint; and
  - (b) if paragraph (a) applies—must refer the complaint, together with any relevant documents or information in its possession or control, to the statutory office-holder.
- (3) In this section:  
*statutory office-holder* means an office established under a territory law (other than this Act) or a law of the Commonwealth, a State or another Territory.
- (4) To remove any doubt, this section is in addition to, and does not limit, section 51A (Referral of advocacy matters).

- U** 53B              **Late application in exceptional circumstances**
- U** 53C              **Parties to ACAT proceeding on discrimination complaint**
- U** 53D              **Reliance on exceptions and exemptions**
- U** 53E              **Kinds of orders—unlawful acts under the Discrimination Act**

## **Division 4.3                      Conciliation of complaints**

### **54                      Outline—div 4.3**

This division sets out the process to help a complainant and the person complained about to endeavour to reach agreement on some or all of the matters complained about in a complaint.

### **55                      What is *conciliation*?**

- (1) For this Act, *conciliation* of a complaint involves the commission acting as an impartial third-party to help the parties to the conciliation to endeavour to resolve the matters raised by the complaint.
- (2) Conciliation requires the parties' willing and informed agreement to take part in the conciliation.  
*Note*              The commission may require a party to attend conciliation, but may not require the party to take part.
- (3) The parties to conciliation decide the outcome of the conciliation, usually with advice from the commission.

### **56                      Delegation of commission's function of conciliation**

The commission may delegate the function of conciliation of a complaint to—



- (a) a commissioner other than the commissioner who is considering the complaint; or
- (b) a member of staff or a consultant engaged by the commission for this Act.

*Note 1* Consultants may be engaged for this Act under s 37.

*Note 2* For the making of delegations and the exercise of delegated functions, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.4.

## **57 Parties to conciliation**

- (1) The parties to the conciliation are the complainant and the person complained about.
- (2) The commission may allow other people to attend the conciliation if the commission considers that their attendance will help the conciliation.
- (3) However, neither the complainant nor the person complained about may be represented by anyone else in the conciliation unless the commission is satisfied that the representation is likely to help the conciliation substantially.

## **58 Request for third-party to attend**

The commission may, in writing, ask a person other than a party to attend the conciliation if satisfied that the person's attendance is likely to help the conciliation.

## **59 Compulsory attendance at conciliation**

- (1) The commission may, in writing, require a party to attend the conciliation.
- (2) The requirement to attend must state the time and place that the person is required to attend.

*Note* For the entitlement to representation at conciliation, see s 57 (3).

- (3) A person commits an offence if—
- (a) the person is required to attend a conciliation; and
  - (b) the person does not attend as required.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

- (4) Subsection (3) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse for not attending the conciliation as required.

## 60 Conduct of conciliation

Conciliation is to be conducted in the way the commission decides.

### Example

The commission may decide that a complaint is to be split and the parts are to be conciliated separately.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

## 61 Relationship between conciliation and consideration

- (1) Conciliation of the complaint must be separate from, and independent of, any consideration of the complaint.

### Examples

- 1 Information obtained during the conciliation must not be used for the consideration of the complaint.
- 2 A person considering a complaint must not conciliate, or take part in the conciliation of, the complaint.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (2) However—
- (a) the commission may use information from the consideration to help with conciliation; and

- (b) this section does not apply to a conciliation agreement, or part of a conciliation agreement, if the parties have agreed under section 63 to allow the commission to use the agreement or part.

**U 62 Conciliated agreements**

- (1) If a complaint is resolved by conciliation, the commission must help the parties make a written record (the *conciliation agreement*) of the agreement they have reached.
- (2) Each party must sign the agreement.
- (3) The commission must—
  - (a) give each party a copy of the conciliation agreement; and
  - (b) if the complaint is a discrimination complaint—give the agreement to the discrimination tribunal.
- (4) If the complaint to which the conciliation agreement relates is a discrimination complaint, the agreement is enforceable as if it were an order of the discrimination tribunal.

**63 Use of conciliation agreement by commission**

- (1) This section applies if the parties to the conciliation make a conciliation agreement.
- (2) The commission may use information in the conciliation agreement, whether for considering the complaint to which the agreement relates or otherwise, only if the parties agree to the use by the commission of the agreement or the part of the agreement containing the information.
- (3) An agreement to allow the commission to use a conciliation agreement, or part of a conciliation agreement, may be in the conciliation agreement or elsewhere.

- (4) If the parties agree to the use by the commission of the conciliation agreement, or a part of the agreement, the commission may use anything in the conciliation agreement, or the part of the agreement, as the commission considers appropriate.

**64                   Unsuccessful conciliation of discrimination matter**

If, at any time during the conciliation of a discrimination matter, the commission decides that conciliation is unlikely to be successful, the commission must tell the parties in writing about the decision and include a discrimination referral statement with the notice.

**65                   End of conciliation**

- (1) Conciliation of a complaint ends if—
- (a) agreement is reached on the matters raised by the complaint and the parties end the conciliation; or
  - (b) the parties agree to end the conciliation; or
  - (c) a party withdraws from the conciliation; or
  - (d) the commission is satisfied that the conciliation is unlikely to be successful.
- (2) If the conciliation ends, the commission must, as soon as practicable, tell the following people that the conciliation has ended and why it has ended:
- (a) the complainant;
  - (b) the person complained about.

**66                   Admissibility of evidence**

- (1) This section—
- (a) applies to—
    - (i) a communication made between people attending a conciliation (including the commission); and

- (ii) a document (whether delivered or not) that has been prepared in relation to the conciliation; but
  - (b) does not apply to a conciliation agreement, or part of a conciliation agreement, if the parties have agreed under section 63 to allow the commission to use the agreement or part.
- (2) The *Evidence Act 1995* (Cwlth), section 131 (Exclusion of evidence of settlement negotiations) applies to a communication or document to which this section applies as if the communication or document were a communication or document mentioned in that Act, section 131 (1).

**67 Conciliation attendees protected from civil liability**

A person attending conciliation does not incur civil liability for an act done honestly and without recklessness at the conciliation.

**Division 4.4 Consideration of complaints**

**68 Outline—div 4.4**

This division sets out the process the commission follows, and the powers the commission may exercise, in considering a complaint.

**69 Purpose of considering complaints**

A consideration of a complaint has the following 3 main purposes:

- (a) to allow the commission to decide whether the complaint is a complaint that may be made under this Act and whether the complainant is a person who may make the complaint under this Act;
- (b) to provide information that may be used to help conciliation of the complaint;
- (c) to work out whether the conduct complained about was engaged in in the way complained about and, however it was

engaged in, whether there is an adequate ground for the commission to report.

**70                      Single consideration of several complaints**

The commission may conduct a single consideration in relation to 2 or more complaints that arise out of the same or substantially the same circumstances or subject matter.

**71                      Representative complaints**

The commission may deal with a complaint as a representative complaint if the commission believes, on reasonable grounds, that—

- (a) the complainant is a member of a class of people the members of which have, or are reasonably likely to have, complaints against a single person or group; and
- (b) the material facts of the complainant's complaint are the same as, or similar or related to, the material facts of the complaints of other members of the class; and
- (c) common questions of law or fact arise, or would arise, in the consideration of complaints that have been, or could be, made by other members of the class in relation to the complaints; and
- (d) it is desirable to deal with the complaint as a representative complaint.

## **72 Conduct of consideration**

A consideration in relation to a complaint must be conducted in the way the commission decides, unless otherwise expressly provided by this Act.

### **Example**

The commission may decide that a complaint is to be split and the parts are to be considered separately.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

## **73 Power to ask for information, documents and other things**

- (1) This section applies if the commission believes, on reasonable grounds, that a person can provide information or produce a document or something else relevant to a consideration in relation to a complaint.
- (2) The commission may, by written notice given to the person, require the person to provide the information or produce the document or other thing.
- (3) The notice must state how, and the time within which, the person must comply with the requirement.
- (4) A person commits an offence if—
  - (a) the person is required by a notice under this section to provide information to the commission for a consideration in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) the person is not the complainant or the aggrieved person for the complaint; and

- (c) the person fails to provide the information to the commission as required.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

*Note 1* The Legislation Act, s 170 and s 171 deal with the application of the privilege against selfincrimination and client legal privilege.

*Note 2* If the commission requires a complainant to provide information or produce a document or other thing and the complainant does not comply with the requirement, the commission may close the complaint (see s 78 (1) (d)).

*Note 3* Giving false information is an offence against the Criminal Code, s 338.

- (5) Subsection (4) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse for failing to provide the information to the commission as required.
- (6) A person commits an offence if—
  - (a) the person is required by a notice under this section to produce to the commission a document or other thing for a consideration in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) the person is not the complainant or the aggrieved person for the complaint; and
  - (c) the person fails to produce the document or other thing to the commission as required.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

- (7) Subsection (6) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse for failing to produce the document or other thing to the commission as required.

## **74           Requiring attendance etc**

- (1) If the commission believes, on reasonable grounds, that someone can provide information relevant to a consideration in relation to a complaint, the commission may, by written notice given to the person, require the person to attend before a named person (an



*interviewer*), at the reasonable time and place stated in the notice, to answer questions relevant to the consideration.

*Note* For how documents may be served, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.5.

- (2) A person who attends before an interviewer under a notice under subsection (1) must continue to attend as reasonably required by the interviewer to answer questions relevant to the consideration.
- (3) A person commits an offence if—
  - (a) the person is required by a notice under subsection (1) to attend before an interviewer to answer questions for a consideration in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) the person is not the complainant or the aggrieved person for the complaint; and
  - (c) the person does not attend before the interviewer as required.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

- (4) Subsection (3) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse for not attending before the interviewer as required.
- (5) A person commits an offence if—
  - (a) the person is required by a notice under subsection (1) to attend before an interviewer to answer questions for a consideration in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) the person is not the complainant or the aggrieved person for the complaint; and
  - (c) the person attends before the interviewer as required; and

- (d) the person fails to continue to attend as reasonably required by the interviewer to answer questions relevant to the consideration.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

- (6) Subsection (5) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse for failing to continue to attend as required by the interviewer.
- (7) A person commits an offence if—
  - (a) the person is required by a notice under subsection (1) to attend before an interviewer to answer questions for a consideration in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) the person attends before the interviewer as required; and
  - (c) the interviewer requires the person to answer a question; and
  - (d) the person fails to answer the question.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

*Note 1*   The Legislation Act, s 170 and s 171 deal with the application of the privilege against selfincrimination and client legal privilege.

*Note 2*   Giving false information is an offence against the Criminal Code, s 338.

- (8) Subsection (7) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse for failing to answer the question.

## **75           Privileges against selfincrimination and exposure to civil penalty**

- (1) This section applies if a person is required by a notice under section 73 to provide information or produce a document or other thing.
- (2) This section also applies if—
  - (a) a person is attending before an interviewer in accordance with a requirement under section 74; and

- (b) the interviewer requires the person to answer a question.
- (3) The person cannot rely on the common law privileges against selfincrimination and exposure to the imposition of a civil penalty to refuse to provide the information, produce the document or other thing or answer the question.

*Note* The Legislation Act, s 171 deals with client legal privilege.

- (4) However, any information, document or other thing obtained, directly or indirectly, because of providing the information, the producing of the document or other thing, or the answering of the question is not admissible in evidence against the person in a civil or criminal proceeding, other than a proceeding for—
  - (a) an offence against this part; or
  - (b) any other offence in relation to the falsity of the information, document, other thing or answer.

## **76 Commission may keep document or other thing etc**

- (1) If a document or something else is produced in accordance with a requirement under section 73 (Power to ask for information, documents and other things), the commission—
  - (a) may take possession of, make copies of, or take extracts from, the document or may take possession of the other thing; and
  - (b) may keep the document or other thing for the period that is necessary for the consideration to which the document or thing relates; and
  - (c) during that period, must allow anyone who would be entitled to inspect the document or other thing, if it were not in the possession of the commission, to inspect it and, for a document, make copies of, or take extracts from, it.
- (2) The commission must return a document or something else produced in accordance with a requirement under section 73 if the

commission is no longer entitled to keep the document or thing under this section.

## **Division 4.5                   Closing complaints and reporting**

### **77                   Outline—div 4.5**

- (1) This division sets out when a complaint can be closed and how it is closed, including the making of closing and other reports.
- (2) This division also sets out what a report can contain, the people to whom it may be provided and what happens after a report is made.

### **U 78                   When complaints can be closed**

- (1) The commission may close a complaint at any time if—
  - (a) more than 2 years have elapsed since the circumstances that gave rise to the complaint happened; or
  - (b) the complainant has, without good reason, failed to take reasonable steps to resolve the complaint; or
  - (c) the complainant has failed to comply with a requirement under section 73 (Power to ask for information, documents and other things) or section 74 (Requiring attendance etc); or
  - (d) the complainant tells the commission in writing that the complainant wishes to withdraw the complaint, whether or not because it has been conciliated to the complainant's satisfaction; or
  - (e) the complaint has been referred to a health profession board; or
  - (f) the matters raised by the complaint have been successfully conciliated.
- (2) The commission must close a complaint made to it if—

- (a) the complaint is not a complaint that may be made under this Act; or

*Note* For complaints that may be made under this Act, see s 42.

- (b) the complaint is not made by a person who may make a complaint under this Act; or

*Note* For people who may make a complaint under this Act, see s 43.

- (c) satisfied that—

(i) the complainant has been given a reasonable explanation and the complaint needs no further action by the commission; or

(ii) the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or not made honestly; or

(iii) the matters raised by the complaint have been, or are being, dealt with by a court or tribunal or have been dealt with by the commission; or

(iv) the complaint lacks substance; or

**Example of complaint lacking substance**

The complaint is about discrimination, but the discrimination is not unlawful under the *Discrimination Act 1991*, part 3, part 5, section 66 or part 7.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (d) the complaint is a discrimination complaint that has been referred to the discrimination tribunal; or

(e) the complaint has been dealt with to the commission's satisfaction; or

(f) the complaint has been referred under section 53A (Referral to appropriate statutory office-holder); or

(g) the complaint has otherwise been resolved.

## **79           Reopening complaints**

- (1) The commission may, but need not, reopen a complaint if—
  - (a) the complaint was closed under section 78 (1) (c) because the complainant had not complied with a requirement mentioned in the paragraph; and
  - (b) the complainant complies with the requirement.
- (2) If the requirement was a requirement to do something by a stated time, the requirement is taken to have been complied with for subsection (1) even though the complainant did not do it within the required time.

## **80           How complaints are closed**

- (1) The commission closes a complaint by giving a written report (the *final report*) to—
  - (a) the complainant; and
  - (b) the person complained about.

*Note 1*   If the complaint is dealt with by commission-initiated consideration, the commission cannot give the complainant information about the aggrieved person (see s 49).

*Note 2*   For how documents may be served, see the Legislation Act, pt 19.5.

- (2) However, the commission must not include an adverse comment in relation to a person in the final report unless the commission has given the person a reasonable opportunity to respond to the proposed comment.
- (3) The commission need not give a final report to close a commission-initiated consideration.

## **81 Final report**

- (1) If the commission is satisfied that the person complained about has acted inconsistently with an applicable standard, the final report may make recommendations to the person.

*Note* **Applicable standard**—see dict.

- (2) A recommendation in a final report need not be limited to matters raised by the complaint being closed.
- (3) If a recommendation recommends that action be taken, it must state the reasonable time within which the action should be taken.

## **82 Closing discrimination complaints**

- (1) The final report in relation to a discrimination complaint must include a discrimination referral statement.

*Note* **Discrimination referral statement**—see s 88.

- (2) However, subsection (1) does not apply if—
  - (a) the parties to the complaint have made a conciliation agreement in relation to the complaint; or
  - (b) the complainant has withdrawn the complaint.
- (3) This section is additional to the other requirements of this Act for a final report.

## **83 Third-party reports**

- (1) The commission may make recommendations to a third-party in a report (a **third-party report**) other than a final report if, after considering a complaint, the commission is satisfied—
  - (a) that—
    - (i) the third-party has acted inconsistently with an applicable standard that applies to the third-party, or is otherwise

failing to adequately do something the third-party is required to do; or

*Note*     **Applicable standard**—see dict.

(ii) the recommendations are about matters of public policy; or

(iii) the recommendations are about matters that the third-party has an appropriate interest in; and

(b) that it is in the public interest to make the report.

**Example of people to whom third-party report may be given**

- 1 a Minister
- 2 a non-government provider
- 3 the employer of the person complained about
- 4 a health profession board
- 5 a hospital or other institution where services are provided by the person complained about
- 6 a funding body

*Note*     An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (2) A recommendation need not be limited to matters raised by the complaint.
- (3) If a recommendation recommends that action be taken, it must state the reasonable time within which the action should be taken.
- (4) However, the commission must not include an adverse comment in relation to a person in a third-party report unless the commission has given the person a reasonable opportunity to respond to the proposed comment.
- (5) To remove any doubt, a third-party report may be made after a final report has been made, whether or not the person complained about has complied with any recommendation made to the person.



- (6) In this section:

*third-party* means an entity other than the complainant or the person complained about.

#### **84 Commission-initiated reports**

- (1) The commission may prepare a report (a *commission-initiated report*) of a commission-initiated consideration and give it to anyone the commission considers appropriate.
- (2) However, the commission must not include an adverse comment in relation to a person in a commission-initiated report unless the commission has given the person a reasonable opportunity to respond to the proposed comment.

#### **85 Responding to recommendations**

- (1) An entity commits an offence if—
- (a) a final report, a third-party report or commission-initiated report recommends that an entity take action within a stated time; and
- (b) the entity has been given a copy of the report; and
- (c) the entity fails to tell the commission in writing about the action the entity has taken in relation to the recommendation within 45 days after the later of the following:
- (i) the end of the stated time or any further period allowed by the commission;
- (ii) 3 weeks after the day the entity is given the report.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units.

- (2) An offence against this section is a strict liability offence.
- (3) The commission may extend, by no longer than 15 days, the period of 45 days mentioned in subsection (1) if, before the end of the

period, the entity asks the commission in writing to extend the period.

*Note*     If the entity has not complied with the recommendation, the commission may be able to make a third-party report or publish the entity's name etc under s 86.

## **86                   Publication of name and details of non-complying entity**

- (1) For this section, an entity is a *non-complying entity* if—
  - (a) a final report or third-party report recommends that the entity do something within, or stop doing something by, a stated time; and
  - (b) the entity has been given a copy of the report; and
  - (c) the entity has not done the thing, or stopped doing the thing, by the end of the time.
- (2) An entity is also a *non-complying entity* if—
  - (a) the commission has required the entity under this Act to provide information, produce a document or thing or attend to answer questions; and
  - (b) the entity has not complied with the requirement.
- (3) The commission may do either or both of the following in relation to the non-complying entity's name and details of the entity's failure mentioned in subsection (1) or (2):
  - (a) publish them;
  - (b) report them to the Minister.

### **Examples of where name and details may be published for par (a)**

- 1     on the commission website
- 2     in a newspaper
- 3     in the commission's annual report

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (4) However, the commission must not publish or report under subsection (3) unless—
- (a) the commission has given the entity a written notice that—
    - (i) gives details of the entity’s failure to which the notice relates; and
    - (ii) explains that the commission proposes to publish under subsection (3) the entity’s name and details of the entity’s failure; and
    - (iii) invites submissions about the proposed publication within the time stated in the notice (not less than 2 weeks after the day the entity is given the notice); and
  - (b) the time stated in the notice has ended; and
  - (c) the commission has considered any submission made by the entity within the time and is satisfied that it is in the public interest to publish the entity’s name and details of the entity’s failure.
- (5) To remove any doubt, if the commission reports to the Minister under subsection (3), the Minister may, but need not, present the report to the Legislative Assembly.

## **87 Reporting to Minister**

- (1) The commission may, on its own initiative, give the Minister a written report about any matter of public importance related to the commission, the commission’s functions or a matter that may be complained about under this Act.

*Note* The Minister may direct the commission to report under s 17.

- (2) If the commission gives the Minister a report mentioned in subsection (1) or a third-party report, the Minister must present the report to the Legislative Assembly within 6 sitting days after the day the Minister receives the report.

**U 88                   Discrimination referral statements**

A *discrimination referral statement* is a statement in a notice in relation to a complaint to the effect that—

- (a) the commission has closed the complaint; and
- (b) the complainant may ask the commission to refer the complaint to the discrimination tribunal within 60 days after the day the notice is given to the complainant; and
- (c) after the 60-day period, the complainant may apply to the discrimination tribunal under the *Discrimination Act 1991*, section 78 (Late application in exceptional circumstances) for the complaint to be heard.

*Note*           The commission must refer the complaint to the tribunal if the complainant asks it to refer the complaint within the 60-day period (see s 53).

## **Part 5**                      **Health code and health profession boards**

### **Division 5.1**              **Health code of health rights and responsibilities**

#### **89**                      **Approval of health code**

- (1) The Minister may, in writing, approve a code (the *health code*) of health rights and responsibilities.
- (2) An approved code is a disallowable instrument.

*Note*            A disallowable instrument must be notified, and presented to the Legislative Assembly, under the Legislation Act.

#### **90**                      **Contents of health code**

- (1) The health code—
  - (a) must deal with the implementation of the health provision principles; and
  - (b) may deal with anything else relevant to the provision or use of a health service.
- (2) In this section:

*health provision principles* means the following principles:

- (a) a person is entitled to receive appropriate health services of a high standard;
- (b) a person is entitled to be informed and educated about health matters, and available health services, that may be relevant to the person;
- (c) a person who can take part effectively in the making of a decision dealing with the person's health is entitled to do so;

- (d) a person is entitled to be provided with health services in a considerate way that takes into account his or her background, needs and wishes;
- (e) a provider, or person who provides care for a consumer, should be given consideration and recognition for the provider's, or person's, contribution to health care;
- (f) the confidentiality of information about a person's health should be preserved;
- (g) a person is entitled to reasonable access to information about a person's health;
- (h) a person is entitled to reasonable access to procedures for dealing with grievances about the provision of health services.

## **Division 5.2 Relationship between commission and health profession boards**

### **91 Meaning of registered health professional for div 5.2**

In this division:

*registered health professional*, in relation to a complaint, includes a health professional who was registered at the time the matter complained about happened or failed to happen.

### **92 Referral of complaints to health profession board**

- (1) This section applies if the commission considers that a complaint about a health service indicates that a registered health professional may be contravening, or may have contravened, the required standard of practice, or does not satisfy the suitability to practise requirements, under the *Health Professionals Act 2004*.
- (2) The commission must give the health profession board a copy of—
  - (a) the complaint; and

- (b) all documents it has or gets relating to the complaint.
- (3) To remove any doubt, the referral of a complaint to the health profession board does not prevent the commission from considering the complaint.

### **93 Complaints referred to health profession board**

A health profession board to which the commission has given a complaint in relation to a registered health professional must tell the commission, in writing—

- (a) whether or not the board intends to take action in relation to the health professional; and
- (b) if the board intends to take action in relation to the health professional—what action it proposes to take.

*Note* The *Health Professionals Act 2004*, pt 10 provides for joint consideration of complaints and health profession reports.

### **94 Consideration of health professional reports**

- (1) The commission may consider a health professional report.
- (2) The consideration must be a commission-initiated consideration.
- (3) The health profession board (the *relevant health profession board*) that regulates the health professional's health profession must be kept informed about the consideration as if the board were the complainant.

#### **Example**

The commission must give the health profession board a final report.

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (4) The commission may give the relevant health profession board any information, documents or other things the commission has in relation to the consideration.

## Part 6 Miscellaneous

### 95 Information about complaints

- (1) This section applies to the following services:
  - (a) a disability service;
  - (b) a health service;
  - (c) a service for children and young people;
  - (d) a service for older people.
- (2) If the service is provided at premises, the provider must provide information at the premises to service consumers about their right to make complaints under this Act and how feedback may be given to the service provider.

#### Examples of providing information

- 1 a notice on the wall or a pamphlet in the waiting room
- 2 for a service provided at a person's home—giving the person a pamphlet

*Note* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (3) A service provider commits an offence if the provider fails to comply with subsection (2).

Maximum penalty: 5 penalty units.

- (4) An offence against subsection (3) is a strict liability offence.

### 96 Inspection of incorporated documents

- (1) This section applies to an incorporated document, or an amendment or replacement of an incorporated document.

*Note* For the meaning of *incorporated document*, see the dictionary.



- (2) The chief executive must ensure that the document, amendment or replacement is made available for inspection free of charge to the public on business days at reasonable times at the office of the commission or an administrative unit administered by the chief executive.
- (3) In this section:  
*amendment*, of an incorporated document—see section 97 (6).

## 97 Notification of certain incorporated documents

- (1) This section applies to—
- (a) an incorporated document; or
  - (b) an amendment of, or replacement for, an incorporated document.

### Example of replacement document

a new edition of the incorporated document

*Note 1* For the meaning of *incorporated document*, see the dictionary.

*Note 2* An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see Legislation Act, s 126 and s 132).

- (2) The chief executive may prepare a written notice (an *incorporated document notice*) for the incorporated document, amendment or replacement that contains the following information:
- (a) for an incorporated document—details of the document, including its title, author and date of publication;
  - (b) for a replacement of an incorporated document—details of the replacement, including its title, author and date of publication;
  - (c) for an amendment of an incorporated document—the date of publication of the amendment (or of the document as amended) and a brief summary of the effect of the amendment;

- (d) for an incorporated document or any amendment or replacement—
- (i) a date of effect (no earlier than the day after the day of notification of the notice); and
  - (ii) details of how access to inspect the document, amendment or replacement may be obtained under section 96 (Inspection of incorporated documents); and
  - (iii) details of how copies may be obtained, including an indication of whether there is a cost involved.
- (3) An incorporated document notice is a notifiable instrument.
- Note* A notifiable instrument must be notified under the Legislation Act.
- (4) An incorporated document, and any amendment or replacement of an incorporated document, has no effect under this Act unless—
- (a) an incorporated document notice is notified in relation to the document, amendment or replacement; or
  - (b) the document, amendment or replacement is notified under the Legislation Act, section 47 (6).
- (5) The Legislation Act, section 47 (7) does not apply in relation to incorporated documents.
- (6) In this section:
- amendment***, of an incorporated document, includes an amendment of a replacement for the incorporated document.
- replacement***, for an incorporated document, means—
- (a) a document that replaces the incorporated document; or
  - (b) a document (an ***initial replacement***) that replaces a document mentioned in paragraph (a); or
  - (c) a document (a ***further replacement***) that replaces an initial replacement or any further replacement.

**98**      **Victimisation etc**

- (1) A person (the *first person*) commits an offence if the first person causes or threatens to cause a detriment to someone else (the *other person*) because—
- (a) the other person has—
    - (i) made a complaint under this Act; or
    - (ii) given information or produced a document or other thing to a person exercising a function under this Act or a rights Act; or
    - (iii) given information, produced a document or other thing or answered a question as required under this Act; or
  - (b) the first person believes that the other person intends to do something mentioned in paragraph (a).

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units, imprisonment for 6 months or both.

- (2) A person commits an offence if the person threatens or intimidates someone else with the intention of causing the other person—
- (a) not to make a complaint under this Act; or
  - (b) to withdraw a complaint made under this Act.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units, imprisonment for 6 months or both.

**99**      **Secrecy**

- (1) In this section:

*court* includes a tribunal, authority or person having power to require the production of documents or the answering of questions.

*divulge* includes communicate.

***person to whom this section applies*** means a person who—

- (a) is or has been—
  - (i) a commissioner; or
  - (ii) a person present at conciliation; or
  - (iii) a member of the staff of the commission; or
- (b) exercises, or has exercised, a function under this Act.

***produce*** includes allow access to.

***protected information*** means information about a person that is disclosed to, or obtained by, a person to whom this section applies because of the exercise of a function under this Act by the person or someone else.

- (2) A person to whom this section applies commits an offence if—
  - (a) the person—
    - (i) makes a record of protected information about someone else; and
    - (ii) is reckless about whether the information is protected information about someone else; or
  - (b) the person—
    - (i) does something that divulges protected information about someone else; and
    - (ii) is reckless about whether—
      - (A) the information is protected information about someone else; and

- (B) doing the thing would result in the information being divulged to someone else.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units, imprisonment for 6 months or both.

- (3) Subsection (2) does not apply if the record is made, or the information is divulged—
- (a) under this Act or another territory law; or
  - (b) in relation to the exercise of a function, as a person to whom this section applies, under this Act or another territory law.
- (4) Subsection (2) does not apply to the divulging of protected information about someone with the person's consent.
- (5) A person to whom this section applies need not divulge protected information to a court, or produce a document containing protected information to a court, unless it is necessary to do so for this Act or another territory law.

## **100 Protection of officials from liability**

- (1) In this section:
- official* means—
- (a) a commissioner; or
  - (b) a member of staff of the commission; or
  - (c) a person who exercises a function under this Act.
- (2) An official, or anyone engaging in conduct under the direction of an official, is not personally liable for anything done or omitted to be done honestly and without recklessness—
- (a) in the exercise of a function under this Act; or
  - (b) in the reasonable belief that the conduct was in the exercise of a function under this Act.

- (3) Any civil liability that would, apart from subsection (2), attach to an official attaches instead to the Territory.

**101 Intergovernmental arrangements**

- (1) The Minister may make an arrangement with a Commonwealth Minister in relation to—
- (a) the exercise on a joint basis of any of the Commonwealth commission's functions; or
  - (b) the exercise by the commission, on behalf of the Commonwealth, of any of the Commonwealth commission's functions; or
  - (c) the exercise by the Commonwealth commission, on behalf of the Territory, of any of the commission's functions.
- (2) An arrangement may contain the incidental or supplementary provisions that the Minister and the Commonwealth Minister consider necessary.
- (3) The Minister may arrange with the Commonwealth Minister for the variation or revocation of an arrangement.
- (4) An arrangement, and any variation or revocation of an arrangement, must be in writing.
- (5) An arrangement, or a variation or revocation of an arrangement, is a notifiable instrument.

*Note* A notifiable instrument must be notified under the Legislation Act.

**102 Exercise of functions under intergovernmental arrangement**

- (1) This section applies to an act done by or in relation to the Commonwealth commission under an arrangement made under section 101 in relation to the exercise by the Commonwealth commission of any of the human rights commission's functions.
- (2) The act is taken, for this Act and all other territory laws, to have been done by or in relation to the human rights commission.

**103 Determination of fees and expenses for people asked to attend conciliation**

- (1) The Minister may, in writing, determine the fees and expenses payable to people attending the conciliation in accordance with a request under section 58.
- (2) A determination is a notifiable instrument.

*Note* A notifiable instrument must be notified under the Legislation Act.

**104 Approved forms**

- (1) The commission may approve forms for this Act.
- (2) An approved form is a notifiable instrument.

*Note* A notifiable instrument must be notified under the Legislation Act.

**105 Regulation-making power**

The Executive may make regulations for this Act.

*Note* A regulation must be notified, and presented to the Legislative Assembly, under the Legislation Act.

## **U** Dictionary

(see s 3)

*Note 1* The Legislation Act contains definitions and other provisions relevant to this Act.

*Note 2* For example, the Legislation Act, dict, pt 1, defines the following terms:

- ACT
- discrimination tribunal
- document
- entity
- may (see s 146)
- must (see s 146)
- public advocate
- under.

*act* includes omission.

*aggrieved person*, in relation to a complaint—see section 43 (1) (a).

*applicable standard*, in relation to a service provider, means anything mentioned in any of the following provisions that applies to the provider:

- (a) section 39 (1) (b) (When may someone complain about a health service?);
- (b) section 40 (b) (When may someone complain about a disability service?);
- (c) section 40A (b) (When may someone complain about a service for children and young people?);
- (d) section 41 (b) (When may someone complain about a service for older people?).

*child* means a person who is under 12 years old.

*children and young people commissioner* means the Children and Young People Commissioner under section 19A.



***children and young people service complaint*** means a complaint about a service for children and young people that may be made, or is made, under section 40A.

***commission***—

- (a) see section 11; but
- (b) in relation to the consideration of a complaint—means the commissioner considering the complaint for the commission.

***commission-initiated consideration***—see section 48 (1) and (2).

***Commonwealth commission*** means the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission established by the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cwlth).

***complainant*** means—

- (a) in relation to a complaint—the person who made the complaint; but
- (b) in relation to a commission-initiated consideration under section 48 (2)—the commission and not the person who made the complaint (see s 49).

***conciliation***, of a complaint—see section 55 (1).

***conciliation agreement***—see section 62 (1).

***conduct*** means an act, an omission to do an act or a state of affairs.

***consideration***, of a complaint, means consideration of the complaint under division 4.4.

***disability service***—see section 8.

***disability service complaint*** means a complaint about a service for people with a disability that may be made, or is made, under section 40.

***disability and community services commissioner*** means the Disability and Community Services Commissioner under section 20.

**discrimination commissioner** means the Discrimination Commissioner under section 22.

**discrimination complaint**—see section 42 (1) (c).

**discrimination referral statement**—see section 88.

**engage** in conduct means—

- (a) do an act; or
- (b) omit to do an act.

**final report**, in relation to a complaint—see section 81.

**funding body** means an entity that has a function of paying for services provided to others.

**health code**—see section 89.

**health professional**—see the *Health Professionals Act 2004*, section 14.

**health professional report** means a report about a health professional that may be made, or is made, under the *Health Professionals Act 2004*, section 78 (Who may report?).

**health service**—see section 7.

**health service complaint** means a complaint about a health service that may be made, or is made, under section 39.

**health services commissioner** means the Health Services Commissioner under section 24.

**human rights commissioner** means the Human Rights Commissioner under section 26.

**incorporated document** means—

- (a) the standards mentioned in section 39 (1) (b) (v) (When may someone complain about a health service?); or

- 
- (b) the standards mentioned in section 40 (b) (i) or (iv) (When may someone complain about a disability service?); or
  - (c) an instrument applied, adopted or incorporated by a statutory instrument under this Act.

***older people service complaint*** means a complaint about a service for older people that may be made, or is made, under section 40.

***party***, to the conciliation of a complaint—the complainant and the person complained about are each a ***party*** to the conciliation (see section 57 (1)).

***provider***, of a service—see section 10.

***registered***, for a health professional, means registered under the *Health Professionals Act 2004*.

***related Act***—each of the following is a ***related Act***:

- (a) *Disability Services Act 1991*;
- (b) *Discrimination Act 1991*;
- (c) *Health Professionals Act 2004*;
- (d) *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*;
- (e) *Human Rights Act 2004*.

***service for children and young people***—see section 8A.

***service for older people***—see section 9.

***third-party report***—see section 83 (1).

***young person*** means a person who is 12 years old or older, but not yet an adult.

## Endnotes

1 About the endnotes

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## Endnotes

### 1 About the endnotes

Amending and modifying laws are annotated in the legislation history and the amendment history. Current modifications are not included in the republished law but are set out in the endnotes.

Not all editorial amendments made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 are annotated in the amendment history. Full details of any amendments can be obtained from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

Uncommenced amending laws and expiries are listed in the legislation history and the amendment history. These details are underlined. Uncommenced provisions and amendments are not included in the republished law but are set out in the last endnote.

If all the provisions of the law have been renumbered, a table of renumbered provisions gives details of previous and current numbering.

The endnotes also include a table of earlier republications.

### 2 Abbreviation key

am = amended	ord = ordinance
amdt = amendment	orig = original
ch = chapter	par = paragraph/subparagraph
def = definition	pres = present
dict = dictionary	prev = previous
disallowed = disallowed by the Legislative Assembly	(prev...) = previously
div = division	pt = part
exp = expires/expired	r = rule/subrule
Gaz = gazette	renum = renumbered
hdg = heading	reloc = relocated
IA = Interpretation Act 1967	R[X] = Republication No
ins = inserted/added	RI = reissue
LA = Legislation Act 2001	s = section/subsection
LR = legislation register	sch = schedule
LRA = Legislation (Republication) Act 1996	sdiv = subdivision
mod = modified/modification	sub = substituted
o = order	SL = Subordinate Law
om = omitted/repealed	<u>underlining</u> = whole or part not commenced or to be expired

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### 3 Legislation history

**Human Rights Commission Act 2005 A2005-40**

notified LR 1 September 2005  
s 1, s 2 commenced 1 September 2005 (LA s 75 (1))  
remainder commenced 1 November 2006 (s 2 and CN2006-21)

as amended by

**Human Rights Commission (Children and Young People Commissioner) Amendment Act 2005 A2005-46 (as am by A2006-3 sch 1 pt 1.2)**

notified LR 2 September 2005  
s 1, s 2 commenced 1 September 2005 (LA s 75 (1))  
remainder commenced 1 November 2006 (s 2 and see A2005-40, s 2 and CN2006-21)

**Human Rights Commission Legislation Amendment Act 2006 A2006-3 s 4**

notified LR 22 February 2006  
s 1, s 2 commenced 22 February 2006 (LA s 75 (1))  
s 4 commenced 23 February 2006 (s 2)

**Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2006 A2006-40 sch 1 pt 1.7**

notified LR 28 September 2006  
s 1, s 2 commenced 28 September 2006 (LA s 75 (1))  
sch 1 pt 1.7 commenced 1 November 2006 (s 2 (2) and see A2005-40, s 2 and CN2006-21)

**Human Rights Commission Amendment Act 2006 A2006-44**

notified LR 25 October 2006  
s 1, s 2 commenced 25 October 2006 (LA s 75 (1))  
remainder commenced 1 November 2006 (s 2 and see A2005-40, s 2 and CN2006-21)

**Carers Recognition Legislation Amendment Act 2006 A2006-47 pt 4**

notified LR 28 November 2006  
s 1, s 2 commenced 28 November 2006 (LA s 75 (1))  
pt 4 commenced 28 May 2007 (s 2 and LA s 79)

## Endnotes

3 Legislation history

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**Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2007  
A2007-22 sch 1 pt 1.10**

notified LR 5 September 2007

s 1, s 2 commenced 5 September 2007 (LA s 75 (1))

sch 1 pt 1.10 commenced 6 September 2007 (s 2)

**Children and Young People (Consequential Amendments) Act 2008  
A2008-20 sch 2 pt 2.9, sch 3 pt 3.16**

notified LR 17 July 2008

s 1, s 2 commenced 17 July 2008 (LA s 75 (1))

s 3 commenced 18 July 2008 (s 2 (1))

sch 2 pt 2.9 commenced 9 September 2008 (s 2 (3) and see Children and Young People Act 2008 A2008-19, s 2 and CN2008-13)

sch 3 pt 3.16 commenced 27 October 2008 (s 2 (4) and see Children and Young People Act 2008 A2008-19, s 2 and CN2008-13)

**Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2008  
(No 2) A2008-22 sch 1 pt 1.5**

notified LR 8 July 2008

s 1, s 2 commenced 8 July 2008 (LA s 75 (1))

sch 1 pt 1.5 commenced 29 July 2008 (s 2)

**Statute Law Amendment Act 2008 A2008-28 sch 3 pt 3.34**

notified LR 12 August 2008

s 1, s 2 commenced 12 August 2008 (LA s 75 (1))

sch 3 pt 3.34 commenced 26 August 2008 (s 2)

**ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Legislation Amendment  
Act 2008 A2008-36 sch 1 pt 1.31**

notified LR 4 September 2008

s 1, s 2 commenced 4 September 2008 (LA s 75 (1))

sch 1 pt 1.31 commences on the commencement of ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 A2008-35 s 6 (s 2 (1))

*Note* default commencement under A2008-35: 4 September 2010

## 4 Amendment history

### Commencement

s 2 sub A2006-3 s 4  
om R1 LA s 89 (4)

### Main objects of Act

s 6 am A2005-46 s 4, s 5; A2007-22 amdt 1.31-1.33; pars renum  
R3 LA  
sub A2008-22 amdt 1.23

### What is a *disability service*?

s 8 hdg sub A2005-46 s 6  
s 8 am A2005-46 s 6

### What is a *service for children and young people*?

s 8A ins A2005-46 s 7  
am A2008-20 amdt 2.20, amdt 3.31

### Members of commission

s 12 am A2005-46 s 8; pars renum A2005-46 s 9; A2006-44 s 4,  
s 5; pars renum R1 LA

### Commission's functions

s 14 am A2005-46 s 10, s 11; pars renum A2005-46 s 12;  
A2008-20 amdt 3.32

### Commission president

div 3.2 hdg om A2006-44 s 6

### Appointment of president

s 18 om A2006-44 s 6

### President's functions

s 19 om A2006-44 s 6

### Children and young people commissioner

div 3.3 hdg orig div 3.3 hdg renum as div 3.4 hdg  
ins A2005-46 s 13

### Appointment of children and young people commissioner

s 19A ins A2005-46 s 13

### Children and young people commissioner's functions

s 19B ins A2005-46 s 13

### Delegation of children and young people commissioner's functions

s 19BA ins A2006-40 amdt 1.20  
am A2008-22 amdt 1.24

## Endnotes

4 Amendment history

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### **Advisory committees for services for children and young people**

s 19C ins A2005-46 s 13

### **Disability and community services commissioner**

div 3.4 hdg orig div 3.4 hdg renum as div 3.5 hdg  
(prev div 3.3 hdg) renum as div 3.4 hdg A2005-46 s 15

### **Disability and community services commissioner's functions**

s 21 sub A2005-46 s 14

### **Delegation of disability and community services commissioner's functions**

s 21A ins A2006-40 amdt 1.21  
am A2008-22 amdt 1.24

### **Discrimination commissioner**

div 3.5 hdg orig div 3.5 hdg renum as div 3.6 hdg  
(prev div 3.4 hdg) renum as div 3.5 hdg A2005-46 s 15

### **Delegation of discrimination commissioner's functions**

s 23A ins A2006-40 amdt 1.22  
am A2008-22 amdt 1.24

### **Health services commissioner**

div 3.6 hdg orig div 3.6 hdg renum as div 3.7 hdg  
(prev div 3.5 hdg) renum as div 3.6 hdg A2005-46 s 15

### **Delegation of health services commissioner's functions**

s 25A ins A2006-40 amdt 1.23  
am A2008-22 amdt 1.24

### **Human rights commissioner**

div 3.7 hdg orig div 3.7 hdg renum as div 3.8 hdg  
(prev div 3.6 hdg) renum as div 3.7 hdg A2005-46 s 15

### **Appointment of human rights commissioner**

s 26 sub A2006-44 s 7

### **Delegation of human rights commissioner's functions**

s 27A ins A2006-40 amdt 1.24  
am A2008-22 amdt 1.24

### **Ending appointments**

div 3.8 hdg orig div 3.8 hdg renum as div 3.9 hdg  
(prev div 3.7 hdg) renum as div 3.8 hdg A2005-46 s 19

### **Application—div 3.8**

s 28 hdg sub A2005-46 s 16  
s 28 am A2005-46 s 17; pars renum A2005-46 s 18  
sub A2006-44 s 28

### **Commission procedures**

div 3.9 hdg orig div 3.9 hdg renum as div 3.10 hdg  
(prev div 3.8 hdg) renum as div 3.9 hdg A2005-46 s 19



**Time and place of commission meetings**

s 30 am A2006-44 s 9

**Presiding member at meetings**

s 31 om A2006-44 s 10

**Voting at meetings**

s 33 am A2006-44 s 11

**Conduct of meetings etc**

s 35 am A2008-28 amdt 3.99

**Staff and consultants of commission**

div 3.10 hdg (prev div 3.9 hdg) renum as div 3.10 hdg A2005-46 s 19

**When may someone complain about a disability service?**

s 40 hdg sub A2005-46 s 20

s 40 am A2005-46 s 20

**When may someone complain about a service for children and young people?**

s 40A ins A2005-46 s 21

**What complaints may be made under this Act?**

s 42 sub A2005-46 s 22

**Who may make a complaint under this Act?**

s 43 am A2005-46 s 23, s 24; A2006-47 ss 22-25; ss renum R2 LA; A2008-22 amdt 1.25, amdt 1.26

**Commission's obligation to be prompt and efficient**

s 45 am A2008-22 amdt 1.27, amdt 1.28

**Outline—div 4.2**s 47 am A2008-22 amdt 1.29; [A2008-36 amdt 1.352](#)**Consideration without complaint or appropriate complainant**s 48 am A2005-46 s 25; A2008-22 amdt 1.30, amdt 1.31; [A2008-36 amdt 1.353](#)**Allocating complaints**

s 50 am A2006-44 s 12

**Referral of advocacy matters**s 51A ins A2005-46 s 26  
am A2008-20 amdt 3.33**Referral to appropriate statutory office-holder**s 52A (prev s 53A) ins A2008-22 amdt 1.32  
[reloc and renum as s 52A A2008-36 amdt 1.355](#)**Discrimination complaints to ACAT**[div 4.2A hdg](#) [ins A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

## Endnotes

4 Amendment history

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### **Meaning of unlawful act—div 4.2A**

s 53 [sub A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

### **Referral of discrimination complaints**

s 53A [orig s 53A reloc and renum as s 52A](#)  
[ins A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

### **Late application in exceptional circumstances**

s 53B [ins A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

### **Parties to ACAT proceeding on discrimination complaint**

s 53C [ins A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

### **Reliance on exceptions and exemptions**

s 53D [ins A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

### **Kinds of orders—unlawful acts under the Discrimination Act**

s 53E [ins A2008-36 amdt 1.354](#)

### ***What is conciliation?***

s 55 [sub A2006-44 s 13](#)

### ***Delegation of commission's function of conciliation***

s 56 [sub A2006-44 s 14](#)

### ***Parties to conciliation***

s 57 [am A2006-44 s 25](#)

### ***Request for third-party to attend***

s 58 [am A2006-44 s 25](#)

### ***Compulsory attendance at conciliation***

s 59 [am A2006-44 s 25](#)

### ***Conduct of conciliation***

s 60 [am A2006-44 s 25](#)

### ***Relationship between conciliation and consideration***

s 61 [am A2006-44 s 15, s 16](#)

### ***Conciliated agreements***

s 62 [am A2006-44 s 17, s 25; A2008-36 amdt 1.356, amdt 1.357](#)

### ***Use of conciliation agreement by commission***

s 63 [sub A2006-44 s 18](#)

### ***Unsuccessful conciliation of discrimination matter***

s 64 [am A2006-44 s 25](#)

### ***End of conciliation***

s 65 [am A2006-44 s 19, s 25](#)

### ***Admissibility of evidence***

s 66 [am A2006-44 s 20](#)

**When complaints can be closed**

s 78 am A2008-22 amdt 1.33; A2008-36 amdt 1.358, amdt 1.359

**Closing discrimination complaints**

s 82 am A2008-22 amdt 1.34

**Discrimination referral statements**

s 88 sub A2008-22 amdt 1.35; A2008-36 amdt 1.360

**Information about complaints**

s 95 am A2005-46 s 27

**Secrecy**

s 99 am A2005-46 s 28; A2006-44 s 21; pars renum R1 LA

**Protection of officials from liability**

s 100 am A2006-44 s 22; pars renum R1 LA

**Transitional**

pt 7 hdg exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Definitions for pt 7**

s 106 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Conduct engaged in by previous discrimination commissioner**

s 107 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Conduct engaged in by community and health services complaints commissioner**

s 108 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Complaints under CHSC Act and HR(PA) Act**

s 109 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Undeclared complaints under pre-amendment Discrimination Act**

s 110 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Investigations under pre-amendment Discrimination Act**

s 111 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Right to make applications to discrimination tribunal**

s 112 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Requirement under pre-amendment Discrimination Act**

s 113 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Direction by discrimination commissioner**

s 114 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Undecided applications to discrimination tribunal to strike out complaint**

s 115 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

**Other undecided applications to discrimination tribunal**

s 116 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

## Endnotes

4 Amendment history

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### Requests to review under HR(PA) Act

s 117 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

### Appeal rights in relation to requests to review

s 118 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

### References to community and health services complaints commissioner

s 119 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

### Transitional regulations

s 120 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

### Expiry of pt 7

s 121 exp 1 November 2007 (s 121)

### Dictionary

dict

am A2005-46 s 29, s 30; A2008-36 amdts 1.361-1.363

def **applicable standard** sub A2005-46 s 31

def **child** ins A2005-46 s 32

def **children and young people commissioner** ins A2005-46 s 32

def **children and young people service complaint** ins A2005-46 s 32

def **conciliator** om A2006-44 s 23

def **disability service** ins A2005-46 s 32

def **discrimination commissioner** ins A2005-46 s 32

def **discrimination complaint** sub A2005-46 s 33

def **incorporated document** sub A2005-46 s 34

def **president** om A2006-44 s 24

def **service for children and young people** ins A2005-46 s 35

def **service for people with a disability** om A2005-46 s 36

def **unlawful act** ins A2008-36 amdt 1.364

def **young person** ins A2005-46 s 37

## 5 Earlier republications

Some earlier republications were not numbered. The number in column 1 refers to the publication order.

Since 12 September 2001 every authorised republication has been published in electronic pdf format on the ACT legislation register. A selection of authorised republications have also been published in printed format. These republications are marked with an asterisk (\*) in column 1. Electronic and printed versions of an authorised republication are identical.

Republication No and date	Effective	Last amendment made by	Republication for
R1 1 Nov 2006	1 Nov 2006– 27 May 2007	A2006-44	new Act and amendments by A2005-46, A2006-3, A2006-40 and A2006-44
R2 28 May 2007	28 May 2007– 5 Sept 2007	A2006-47	amendments by A2006-47
R3 6 Sept 2007	6 Sept 2007– 1 Nov 2007	A2007-22	amendments by A2007-22
R4 2 Nov 2007	2 Nov 2007– 28 July 2008	A2007-22	commenced expiry
R5 29 July 2008	29 July 2008– 25 Aug 2008	A2008-22	amendments by A2008-22
R6 26 Aug 2008	26 Aug 2008– 8 Sept 2008	A2008-28	amendments by A2008-28
R7 9 Sept 2008	9 Sept 2008– 26 Oct 2008	<u>A2008-36</u>	amendments by A2008-20

## Endnotes

6 Uncommenced amendments

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### 6 Uncommenced amendments

The following amendments have not been included in this republication because they were uncommenced at the republication date:

<p><b>ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Legislation Amendment Act 2008 A2008-36 sch 1 pt 1.31</b></p>
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## Part 1.31 Human Rights Commission Act 2005

### [1.352] Section 47 (4)

*omit*

section 53A

*substitute*

section 52A

### [1.353] Section 48 (3) (b), example 3

*substitute*

- 3 It may be possible for action in relation to the complaint to be taken under another Act if the complaint is substantiated by, for example, reporting a health professional to a health profession board or making an application for an occupation discipline order in relation to the health professional to the ACAT.

### [1.354] Section 53

*substitute*

---

**Division 4.2A      Discrimination complaints to ACAT****53      Meaning of *unlawful act*—div 4.2A**

In this division:

*unlawful act* means an act that is unlawful under the *Discrimination Act 1991*, part 3 (Unlawful discrimination), part 5 (Sexual harassment), section 66 (Unlawful vilification—race sexuality etc) or part 7 (Other unlawful acts).

**53A      Referral of discrimination complaints**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) either—
    - (i) a complainant is given a discrimination referral statement under section 45 (2) (d) or section 64; or
    - (ii) a statement under section 82 (1) is included in a final report in relation to a complaint; and
  - (b) within 60 days after the statement is given, the complainant requires the commission to refer the complaint to the ACAT.
- (2) The commission must—
  - (a) refer the complaint to the ACAT; and
  - (b) tell the complainant and the person complained about in writing about the referral.

*Note*      The commissioner must also close the complaint (see s 78 (2) (d)).

**53B      Late application in exceptional circumstances**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a complainant has been given a statement under section 45 (2) (d), section 64 or section 82 (1); and

## Endnotes

6 Uncommenced amendments

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- (b) the complainant has not required the commission to refer the complaint to the ACAT within 60 days after the day the statement is given to the complainant.
- (2) The complainant may apply to the ACAT for the complaint to be heard by the ACAT.
- (3) The ACAT may grant the application only if satisfied on reasonable grounds that exceptional circumstances prevented the complainant from requiring the complaint to be referred to the ACAT within the 60-day period.
- (4) If the ACAT grants the application, the complaint is, for this Act, taken to have been referred to the ACAT.

### **53C Parties to ACAT proceeding on discrimination complaint**

The parties to a complaint referred to the ACAT under this division are—

- (a) the complainant; and
- (b) the person complained about; and
- (c) if, on application by the commission, the ACAT joins the commission as a party to the complaint—the commission.

### **53D Reliance on exceptions and exemptions**

In considering whether an act is an unlawful act, the ACAT need not consider any exception in the *Discrimination Act 1991*, part 4 or exemption in the *Discrimination Act 1991*, part 10, unless the ACAT has information suggesting the exception or exemption applies to the act.

### **53E Kinds of orders—unlawful acts under the Discrimination Act**

- (1) This section applies if—



- 
- (a) the commission refers a complaint to the ACAT under this division; and
  - (b) the ACAT is satisfied that the person complained about engaged in an unlawful act.
- (2) The ACAT must make 1 or more of the following orders:
- (a) that the person complained about not repeat or continue the unlawful act;
  - (b) that the person complained about perform a stated reasonable act to redress any loss or damage suffered by a person because of the unlawful act;
  - (c) unless the complaint has been dealt with as a representative complaint—that the person complained about pay to a person a stated amount by way of compensation for any loss or damage suffered by the person because of the unlawful act.
- (3) In this section:

*representative complaint* means a complaint that is dealt with by the commission as a representative complaint under section 71.

**[1.355] Section 53A**

*relocate as section 52A*

**[1.356] Section 62 (3) (b)**

*substitute*

- (b) if the complaint is a discrimination complaint—give the agreement to the ACAT.

**[1.357] Section 62 (4)**

*substitute*

## Endnotes

6 Uncommenced amendments

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- (4) If the complaint to which the conciliation agreement relates is a discrimination complaint, the agreement is enforceable as if it were an order of the ACAT.

### [1.358] Section 78 (2) (d)

*substitute*

- (d) the complaint is a discrimination complaint that has been referred to the ACAT; or

### [1.359] Section 78 (2) (f)

*omit*

section 53A

*substitute*

section 52A

### [1.360] Section 88

*substitute*

## 88 Discrimination referral statements

A *discrimination referral statement* is a statement in a notice in relation to a complaint to the effect that—

- (a) the commission has closed the complaint; and
- (b) the complainant may ask the commission to refer the complaint to the ACAT within 60 days after the day the notice is given to the complainant; and

(c) after the 60-day period, the complainant may apply to the ACAT under section 53B (Late application in exceptional circumstances) for the complaint to be heard.

*Note* The commission must refer the complaint to the ACAT if the complainant asks it to refer the complaint within the 60-day period (see s 53A).

**[1.361] Dictionary, note 2, new dot point**

*insert*

- ACAT

**[1.362] Dictionary, note 2, dot points**

*omit*

- discrimination tribunal

**[1.363] Dictionary, note 2, new dot point**

*insert*

- occupational discipline order

**[1.364] Dictionary, new definition of *unlawful act***

*insert*

*unlawful act*, for division 4.2A (Discrimination complaints to ACAT)—see section 53.

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