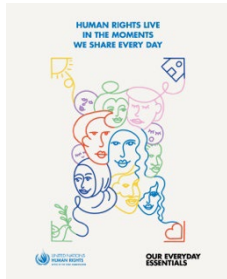




Josephite Justice Office

PO Box 1508 North Sydney NSW 2059

10 December 2025



Josephites join call for an Australian Human Rights Act

International Human Rights Day, with its theme of [our everyday essentials](#) reminds us of the many ways that human rights shape our daily lives, often unnoticed, but essential to us. We share these rights across race, age, religion and background. They keep us safe as we come together in community and strengthen our culture of justice and equality.

“We must continue to emphasise the importance of human rights in our everyday lives, especially at this moment in history, as we face situations of violence, war and the increasing undermining of human rights across supposedly democratic countries,” said Sister Jan Barnett, coordinator of the Josephite Justice Network.

“Whether it’s around our right to a home, to education, to a healthy life, to reliable employment or economic security, all Australians (and indeed all persons on the planet) possess these fundamental rights.”

This year, once again, we are reminded that Australia is the only developed country without a Human Rights Act. The significant role played by Australia as an original signatory in the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been a source of pride for us and emphasises once again the importance of a Human Rights Act for our country. The ongoing call from the UN Human Rights Committee to enshrine our rights into law emphasises the reality that the rights of all persons are fragmented and not well protected in Australian law.

As we come to the end of 2025, many Australians are challenged by standards of living pressures, housing shortages, and a breakdown in health and educational opportunities; by the number of refugees facing visa injustices and racism; by the obstacles confronting First Nations communities encountering ongoing poverty and systemic discrimination (such as the gross inequalities seen in the debates around the age of criminal responsibility). In this context, the urgent need for a Human Rights Act for Australia becomes manifestly obvious.

The appointment of Andrew Dreyfus as the special [Envoy for International Human Rights](#) presents Australia with a propitious opening to move forward at this critical moment in our history. We take this opportunity to urge the government to put aside short-term political gains and work collaboratively to resolve the current hiatus and develop a vision and strategies for the establishment of a Human Rights Act, which demonstrates clearly our commitment to international law, the rights of each person and the common good.

“For the sake of our children and grandchildren, let’s grasp this moment”, said Sister Jan. “We can move forward. We can make a difference. Let’s do it.”

Further Information:

Josephite Justice Network

W: www.sosj.org.au/responding-to-need/justice/

