

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Member for Grayndler and Prime Minister of Australia
334A Marrickville Road
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204

Thursday 9 January 2025 (a CLA Australia Day 2025 letter)

Dear PM

We write to you to urge you to commit to a federal Human Rights Act (HRA) for Australia during the 2025 election campaign. There is overwhelming backing for one in the community, as we have learned in speaking with thousands of influential people on the issue while you have been PM.

Your Government has made substantial progress in difficult economic and social circumstances toward your promise of a fair go for everyone over the past three years.

Stronger jobs growth, higher participation rates, lower unemployment, lower debt and shrinking the gender pay gap, coupled with increasing the minimum wage, reintroducing sector-wide bargaining and the right to “disconnect”, implementing the National Anti-Corruption Commission and substantial reforms to aged care and the NDIS – amongst other initiatives – should be a ticket to a second term, but the polls appear to reflect other perceptions, and not reality.

With the 2025 election now imminent, we see key threats – and opportunities – may result for you and the Labor Party around enacting a federal HRA in 2025/2026:

- * a threat of a silent Labor risking being “wedged” by an alarmist Coalition on the issue*, and
- * a lack of such a visionary Labor commitment to improving daily lives of citizens, and
- * Labor being perceived by disaffected voters as not offering progressive future solutions to citizens who can’t find quick and early relief from poor decisions and misfeasance, such as:
 - * the Coalition-driven, Robodebt illegal government and bureaucracy malfeasance, and
 - * the COVID-19 pandemic-driven lockouts, lockdowns, and removal of basic individual rights such as freedom of assembly and freedom of travel locally and overseas.

Combined, these make a powerful reason for you as Prime Minister and Labor to make an early and prominent commitment to a Human Rights Act for Australia, a ‘Fair Go for All Australians’.

Labor has the chance to be on the front foot with real commitment to positive social change...beyond the publicly-expected commitments such as cost-of-living relief, reducing homelessness and the like.

Civil Liberties Australia is non-party political but it is obvious that a federal HRA is unlikely to be enacted if the Coalition returns to power. It is for that reason that we write to you. We should also disclose that we have met and/or held two-way communications with half of Caucus and the ‘teals’, the Greens and key Independents such as Mr Pocock and Mr Wilkie. Some 95% of these MPs strongly support a federal Human Rights Act for Australia. Several are likely to make a federal HRA a prominent promise in their campaign commitments, which may also put Labor on the back foot.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Kristine Klugman OAM, President

* The Coalition is well aware of the Australian Human Rights Commission’s *Free+Equal* report in December 2023, and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights report on 30 May 2024.