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Equal Opportunity

Is your workplace free from discrimination? The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 came into effect on 1 August 2011 putting the onus on employers to take practical and positive steps to ensure that their workplace is fair and equitable for all members of the workforce. This includes identification and eradication of discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation and their causes, as well there is a duty to promote the realisation of equality.

It should not be overlooked that protection from sexual harassment in the workplace extends to volunteers and unpaid workers

The law covers anti-discrimination in public life as well as in the workplace, for example, clubs, education, sport, accommodation, and the areas where discrimination is illegal include age, carer status, gender activity, industrial activity, physical features, race, personal association (this list is not exhaustive).

What does the new legislation mean for employers?

- Employers have a positive duty to eliminate discrimination and need to be seen to be taking a proactive approach in this respect.
- Develop the understanding that discrimination can be direct or indirect and eradicate all forms of discrimination.
- Assist those with a disability to function in the workplace or access services and provide reasonable adjustments where applicable.
- Ensure that the workplace is free from racial and religious vilification.

There is a new dispute resolution service which is aimed to provide quick and free assistance in the resolution of claims of discrimination brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commission.

Employers are encouraged to have relevant procedures in place and available to staff, encompassing the requirements of this legislation. More information can be found at:

Victorian Equal Opportunities & Human Rights Commission [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#).

The contents of this document are for information purposes only. It is not intended to be advice and you should not act specifically on the basis of this information alone. If expert assistance is required, professional advice should be obtained.

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