14 June 2011

Mr Edward O'Donohue MLC
Chairperson
Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Mr O'Donohue


On behalf of Manningham City Council, I am pleased to be able to provide this submission to the Review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. As a Council, we have a strong commitment to “creating a vibrant, safe and culturally diverse community that fosters participation, connectedness, harmony, social inclusion, health and wellbeing.”

In addition, the organisation fosters a demonstrated commitment to equity and equal opportunity.

At the time of the introduction of the Charter, Manningham Council under the Local Government Act 1989 was already engaged in delivering community and organisational services which considered principles of consultation, community development and engagement, equity and equal opportunity and access and inclusion. These principles set the foundation for community planning to meet the identified needs of community members and the organisation.

The introduction of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 provided Manningham Council the opportunity to further consider the following: cultural change, cost and risk, compliance, knowledge and understanding of staff and complaints management.

Manningham Council to date, has undertaken many initiatives to ensure adoption of the Charter of Human Rights across the organisation. This includes:

- Principles included in the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health Plan and all Social Policies across Council
- Principles included in Human Resource Policies including Equal Opportunity
- Incorporation of the Charter within Council’s reporting systems
• Delivering and reviewing staff training and capacity building
• Promotion within induction of new staff
• Adopted principles within organisational risk management and compliance
• Compliance to the Human Rights Charter by externally funded services as part of their Service Agreements and funding provisions
• Staff compliance to the Charter under formal agreements including Council’s Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, Position Descriptions, Contracts and Performance Appraisals
• Regular reporting to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
• Protocol of local law reviews against all legislative requirements including the Charter.

In response to the Terms of Reference presented we would to like to offer the following comments:

**Mandatory Regular Auditing**

- Local Government already has a number of reporting obligations demonstrating compliance under legislation and acts at federal, state and local levels.
- Additional assessment of compliance would be duplication of an already stringent process.

**Benefits and Cost**

- Manningham has embraced the Charter and has managed to address most issues of Charter implementation without undue challenges to costs.
- The Charter has provided benefits to services, access and engagement.
- The Charter ensures that the rights of the community are at the forefront of planning and decision making
- The Charter promotes and encourages social and community planning across all units within Local Government
- The Charter has fostered positive cultural change across the organisation
- The costs and implications to Council have been minimal and incorporated into existing resources.

Overall, Manningham City Council believes that the benefits of the Charter to Local Government and the community have been significant and any cost imposts to be manageable.

We welcome the review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and look forward to its outcomes.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]
LYDIA WILSON
Chief Executive