Mr Edward O’Donohue, MLC
Chairperson
Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
By email to charter.review@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr O’Donohue

Review of Victoria’s Human Rights Charter

Moreland City Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review of Victoria’s Human Rights Charter. Council aims to go beyond minimum compliance to develop a culture which recognises and respects human rights within the organisation and across all Council functions and also to promote greater understanding and respect for human rights more broadly within the Moreland community.

The City of Moreland covers the inner and mid-northern suburbs of Melbourne. It lies between 4 and 14km north of central Melbourne, and is home to a diverse range of communities. Moreland City Council has demonstrated a commitment to human rights by investing in staff resources. Council employs one officer (0.5 EFT) with a human rights portfolio and supports a number of staff from across the organisation to lead the implementation of Victorian Local Governance Associations Human Rights Toolkit.

Council has also incorporated human rights principles into a number of key policies. Examples from policies have been cited in the 2010 VEOHRC report on the operation of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities including Moreland Council’s Access and Inclusion Policy 2010, which outlines Council’s vision for the full inclusion and participation of people with a disability in all aspects of life.

The policy focuses on improving access in four priority areas:
1. Inclusion and participation in the community
2. Increasing employment
3. Changing attitudes that discriminate
4. Accessing goods and services

Development of the policy was informed by the Charter and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that a human rights approach guides the way Council works to improve conditions for people with disabilities and their families.

Language Link

中文 9280 1910 Español 9280 1916
Italiano 9280 1911 Hrvatski 9280 1917
العربية 9280 1912 官方 9280 1918
Türkçe 9280 1914 All other languages

This paper is 100% recycled
Other Moreland City Council Policies and strategies that have been informed by the Charter include the Health and Wellbeing plan, the Multicultural Policy and Action Plan and the Responsible Gambling Strategy.

Council has also demonstrated human rights leadership through the principles which underpin our Family Violence Strategy. Council offers practical support to and participates in a local Family Violence Prevention network comprised of support and legal services.

In 2010 Council supported A.R.A.B.'s (Anti-Racism Action Band) Northern Trax project that involved Indian international students. Northern Trax brought 200 young people from 50 cultural backgrounds together to create a series of performance installations along the Upfield train line, which was part of the Melbourne International Festival.

Council has also held a number of public events to raise the community's awareness about human rights such as the collaboration with the Human Rights and Arts and Film Festival, a Human Rights community breakfast and Refugee Week events.

One outstanding example of leadership has been Council's recently implemented Allocation of Sporting Grounds and Pavilions Policy which seeks to redress inequity in sports clubs in Moreland. The policy ensures that all sports clubs wishing to access council's sports grounds and pavilions are actively including women, juniors, people with a disability, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds in their clubs.

The policy was developed in response to the Active Women and Girl's strategy and a major focus of the policy is on gender equity. Clubs wishing to use Moreland's facilities must demonstrate that they have policies, strategies and active programs that increase participation of the groups mentioned above. Clubs will not be allocated council facilities if they do not have junior sides and/or registered community programs, and girls or women participating in either competitive or non-competitive physical activities. Priority allocation of facilities will be given to clubs that demonstrate junior, female and CALD participation through opportunities for inclusion and in particular competitions, and provide membership opportunities and inclusion for people with disabilities.

The Moreland Human Rights Working Group was established in November 2010 to assist Council in the implementation of relevant aspects of the Charter.

To date the Working Group has:

- Introduced the VLGA's Human Rights Toolkit "From Compliance to Culture, a human rights toolkit (C2C Toolkit)" to the Moreland Executive Group which endorsed its implementation
- Mapped Council's activities against human rights standards to identify initiatives that promote and protect the freedom, respect, equality and dignity of the people and communities it represents
- Organised for the working group to undertake Human Rights Training.
- Identified relevant gaps Council had in the 2010 VEOHRC Local Government Human Rights Survey. The group has identified officers responsible for key areas and will be working with staff to address relevant areas in time for completion of the 2011 Charter survey.

In relation to audit process Council would welcome the introduction of a more rigorous system to ensure compliance with the Charter. Currently the Commission may help a public authority in reviewing policies and practices for consistency with human rights only when an authority asks for a review. A more proactive approach to identifying potential problems and the provision of advice and support to public authorities in addressing them would reduce the likelihood of such matters escalating and coming before the courts.
In summary Council believes that the Charter is a helpful instrument for improving local government policies, decision-making and service delivery. The Charter provides important support and enhances Council's role in educating people about human rights standards and incorporating these standards into the delivery of public services.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the review process.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Peter Brown
Chief Executive Officer

2017/05/2011