Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework

On 15 March 2023, the Commonwealth Attorney-General referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights the following matters for inquiry and report by 31 March 2024:

- To review the scope and effectiveness of Australia's 2010 Human Rights Framework and the National Human Rights Action Plan.
- To consider whether the Framework should be re-established, as well as the components of the Framework, and any improvements that should be made.
- To consider developments since 2010 in Australian human rights laws (both at the Commonwealth and State and Territory levels) and relevant case law.
- To consider any other relevant matters.

Cancer Council Australia and the McCabe Centre for Law and Cancer made a submission to this inquiry that focused on why a new National Human Rights Framework and National Human Rights Act is needed for people affected by cancer.

The main points in our submission included:

- Cancer is a human rights issue regardless of the current unequal burden of its impacts.
- People affected by cancer need a new National Human Rights Framework and a National Human Rights Act.
- Rights that should be included in a National Human Rights Act are those recommended by the Australian Human Rights Commission; namely to protect human rights, prevent violations (requiring decision makers to consider human rights); provide remedies for breaches, and apply those obligations to all Federal public authorities and outsourced agents. Also, the right to health and other rights related to social determinants should be enshrined in the Act.
- Existing federal mechanisms to protect human rights should be strengthened through reforming Australia's federal discrimination laws with a particular focus on workplace discrimination and genetic discrimination, right against discrimination based on socio-economic disadvantage.

Information about the progress of the consultation, along with a copy of our submission (number 88), can be found on the consultation's webpage.