



22 November 2021

Lorraine Finlay commences term as Human Rights Commissioner

Lorraine Finlay has commenced her term as Human Rights Commissioner.

Commissioner Finlay, [whose appointment](#) was announced in September, said she was looking forward to working to protect and promote human rights and freedoms with her colleagues at the Australian Human Rights Commission.

“My immediate focus will be to consider rights and freedoms in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past 18 months we have all lived with extraordinary restrictions in order to protect public health and safety,” Commissioner Finlay said.

“Human rights need to be a central part of the post-pandemic conversation, both in terms of ensuring that restricted rights and freedoms are fully restored and also reflecting on the lessons to be learnt to ensure that our rights and freedoms are protected in any future emergencies.”

The Human Rights Commissioner is a statutory appointment made under the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth) with responsibility to raise awareness of and advocate for human rights and freedoms in Australia. Each Commissioner appointed to the role establishes their own term goals and areas of focus.

“As Human Rights Commissioner, I intend to focus on fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, movement and association, and ensuring that the protection of these freedoms is a key part of the national conversation,” Commissioner Finlay said.

“I also intend to focus strongly on tackling human trafficking and modern slavery, for the simple reason that while Australia is a global leader on this front, every country can – and must – do more.”

Prior to her appointment, Commissioner Finlay has worked as a lawyer and academic specialising in human rights and public law.

Her most recent roles were as the Senior Human Trafficking Specialist with the Australian Mission to ASEAN and law lecturer at Murdoch University.

For more information visit <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/commission-general/human-rights-commissioner-ms-lorraine-finlay>.