

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
CHAIR'S TABLING STATEMENT

Tuesday 19 June 2018

I rise to speak to the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' *Human Rights Scrutiny Report 5 of 2018* and the committee's annual report for 2016-17.

Of the new bills examined in *Report 5*, 26 have been assessed as not raising human rights concerns as they promote, permissibly limit, or do not engage human rights. The committee is seeking further information in relation to 11 bills and legislative instruments.

I would like to highlight one of these bills: the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2018. The statement of compatibility accompanying this bill draws extensively upon the committee's previous human rights analysis of the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2017. This approach was valuable to the committee in undertaking its technical analysis – the department and the minister are to be commended for this work. This example also illustrates the constructive role of the committee in helping to ensure that human rights issues are appropriately considered in legislative and policy development.

The report also contains the committee's concluded examination of eight bills and instruments. Following correspondence with the relevant minister, the committee has concluded that three of these bills and instruments are likely to be compatible with international human rights law.

Annual Report 2016-17

I also speak to the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' Annual Report for 2016-17. This report covers the period from August 2016 to the end of 2017 and provides information about the work of the committee including the major themes and scrutiny issues arising from the legislation examined by the committee.

The annual report details the significant work the committee has undertaken during the reporting period. In this respect, the committee tabled 17 scrutiny reports, examining a total of 405 bills and Acts and 2,942 legislative instruments. Of the bills considered in this period, the majority — 309 — were initially assessed as either promoting human rights, permissibly limiting human rights or not engaging human rights. The committee requested further information in relation to 54 bills in the reporting period and provided 42 'advice only' comments to legislation proponents.

The committee also tabled one inquiry report during the period — the *Freedom of Speech in Australia* report — which contained 22 recommendations, including those aimed at improving the complaints-handling process of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

I encourage my fellow Members and others to examine the committee's annual report to better inform their consideration of the committee's work during the relevant period.

With these comments, I commend the committee's *Report 5 of 2018* and Annual Report 2016-17 to the House.