

# Human rights: Video 1

## Transcript

[Woman] Music Bed.

[Narrator]

Between 1939 and 1945 as World War II was being fought across Europe around six million Jews, and a further three hundred thousand incurables, or disabled people were murdered by the Nazis. In the years immediately after World War II, the United Nations and The Human Right Commission were established, in response to the atrocities that had occurred during the war.

On December 10, 1948, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed. At first the declaration was concerned mainly with the rights of all human beings, but over time many more conventions and declarations were ratified. The Status of Refugees. The Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Rights of the Child. The Right to Development. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Rights of Indigenous People. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

Australia has state and federal laws to protect civil and political rights, outlines in these international conventions and declarations. They protect the inherent right to life. To self-determination. To vote. To equality before the law. To freedom of expression. Freedom from discrimination. And there right to peaceful assembly. When these rights are infringed it is relatively straight forward to seek justice through the law, these are sometimes called negative human rights.

Australia has a number of laws that aim to protect human rights. The Racial Discrimination Act. The Sex Discrimination Act. The Disability Discrimination Act. The Age Discrimination Act. The ACT in Victoria also has their own charters that set up the relationship between the state and the human rights of its people. While these acts have important symbolic value they all rely on individual complaints, that lead to individual solutions.

Creating systemic change for all members of society remains a much more complex process. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights came into force in 1976. And is one of nine core United Nations, human rights treaties. Rights under this covenant enable people to live with dignity and are sometimes known as positive human rights. They cover important areas of public policy, such as the right to work. Fair unjust conditions of work. Social security. An adequate standard of living. Including adequate food, clothing and housing, health and education.

While Governments aspire to uphold rights under the covenant, there is greater disagreement about what obligations Government has to uphold these collective rights. Disability and aged care support staff should be familiar with the laws that protect human rights. But should also think of themselves as responsive enablers who bring a wide range of experience and ideas to their work.

Human rights apply to everyone. The people you support in disability services or aged care have human rights, and so do you. There will be times where your human rights are in conflict with the human rights of the people you are supporting in your work. When this happens you may need advice or support to work

through the issues, and find a solution that best protects everyone. It's important that staff have access to supportive networks where these issues can be discussed, and worked through in a way that is non-judgemental, and committed to human rights based practice.

[Woman] Music Bed.