



## Your right to **A FAIR GO** DISCRIMINATION – CARER STATUS

**Discrimination is treating someone unfairly or less favourably because of a personal characteristic. In Victoria it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their actual or assumed carer status.**

### What does 'carer status' mean?

Carer status refers to someone who has total or substantial responsibility for the care and support of another person. The dependent person may be a child, a partner, a parent, a relative or a friend. Carer status does not apply to people who are paid to provide care and attention.

At a job interview, Meg mentions she spends a lot of time looking after her mother who has Alzheimer's disease. The interviewer ends the interview saying, "I'm sorry we can't afford to employ people with heavy carer responsibilities".

### When is discrimination against the law?

Discrimination laws apply to public behaviour, not to private conduct.

Public areas covered by the law include accommodation, clubs and club members, disposal of land, education, employment, goods and services, sport and local government.

The VEOHRC complies with Victorian privacy laws and the confidentiality provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act 1995. For a copy of the VEOHRC's privacy policy, please go to [www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/privacy](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/privacy) or contact the VEOHRC.

DISCLAIMER: This information is intended as a guide only. It is not a substitute for legal advice.

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Voula, whose husband has cancer, applies to study architecture at a university. During a selection interview she is asked whether, given her carer responsibilities, she will have the energy and drive to successfully complete the course. Voula says she will and explains that she has a strong support network of friends and family. The faculty later informs Voula that she is not accepted into the course because of her carer responsibilities.

### How can the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission help?

We help resolve complaints of discrimination by offering a confidential, free and impartial resolution service with the aim of achieving a mutual agreement.

### Representative Complaints

Victoria's equal opportunity laws were amended on October 11 2006 making it possible for a person or representative body to lodge a complaint with the Commission on behalf of a named person or persons who believe they have been subjected to discrimination or sexual harassment. A representative must be either a person with the same complaint or an organisation with sufficient interest in the complaint.

Contact our free and confidential  
**Advice Line: (03) 9281 7100**  
TOLL FREE (country callers) 1800 134 142  
TTY: (03) 9281 7110  
Email: [information@veohrc.vic.gov.au](mailto:information@veohrc.vic.gov.au)  
Free interpreters are available on request