



Your right to **A FAIR GO** DISCRIMINATION – MARITAL 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 marital status.

What does 'marital status' mean?

Marital status refers to whether someone is or isn't single, married, divorced, widowed, separated or a domestic partner. The term 'domestic partner' covers all couples irrespective of sex and sexual orientation.

A transport company with a mostly male workforce wants to employ an office manager. Savanna is the best candidate but is refused the job because she is single and the manager thinks she will distract the other workers.

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.

After Jenna gets married, she notifies her health insurance fund. The next time they send her a rebate, they address it to her husband and make the cheque payable to him, which means she has to get her husband's signature to cash the cheque.

Domestic partners, Peter and Jessica are refused accommodation because the landlord only wants to rent to a married couple. Peter and Jessica may lodge a complaint of discrimination on the basis of marital status. At conciliation, possible negotiated outcomes could include an apology and an undertaking by the landlord to rent the place to them.

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.

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 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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Contact our free and confidential

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Free interpreters are available on request