

15 January 2008

Mr Julian Gardner
Equal Opportunity Review
C/- Department of Justice
Level 24, 121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Gardner

Re: Equal Opportunity Review

The MAV supports the *Equal Opportunity Review Discussion Paper*, particularly the objective of addressing the issue of systemic discrimination. The MAV's submission is confined to;

- support for the development of non-legislative means of reducing systemic discrimination; and
- noting that the prospect of an increase in the powers of the Commission and enhanced advocacy on behalf of complainants will require protections against misuse of the system or malicious complainants.

Non-legislative means of reducing systemic discrimination

The reduction of the causes of discrimination is the optimum means of increasing equality against disadvantaged members of the community. The MAV has limited resources and accordingly is unable, to any significant extent, undertake work with Councils aimed at identifying the existence of barriers to equality and the development of processes aimed to eliminate or reduce the barriers. The MAV supports the establishment of a State funding programme to resource projects of this type.

Balancing rights

The prospect of an increase in the powers of the Commission and enhanced advocacy of behalf of complainants will require the need to ensure that protections against misuse of the system or malicious complainants remain appropriate.

The MAV submits that the dissemination of information in appropriate forms is essential to a proper understanding of the values that underpin the legislation and the legislation itself. This information would serve an educative purpose and may assist in limiting misuse or abuse of the system.

The MAV contact person is Clare Hargreaves, Social Policy Manager. Please contact Clare on 9667 5543 should you have any queries about this matter.

Yours sincerely

ROB SPENCE
Chief Executive Officer