

Handout: The Racial Discrimination Act (1975)

This legislation was passed to outlaw any acts which discriminate against any Australians on the basis of race. It was passed particularly to protect Indigenous Australians against discrimination. Commonwealth legislation overrules State or Territory legislation in areas in which they all share law-making powers. The Racial Discrimination Act could then be used to overrule any remaining or future discriminatory State or Territory laws.

The Racial Discrimination Act was based on international principles contained in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

The passing of the Racial Discrimination Act meant that Australia had adopted international standards of anti-discrimination, and could therefore be judged internationally by those standards.