

St Clare's Human Rights Group

Overview





INTRODUCTION

The launch of the human rights group coincided with the launch of the “Racism, it stops with me” campaign – initiated by the Australian Human Rights Commission. In memory of Auntie Pat Davis Hurst, Mr Chalmers made a presentation of the ‘Racism. It Stops With Me.’ ad featuring Adam Goodes during our NAIDOC Week celebrations of 2013. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ASsZ-u9YV3c). All students and staff were invited to participate in the formation of the new *St. Clare's Human Rights Group* - and subsequently, the group was formed.

We focus on the implications of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Australian Human Rights Commission and our personal interests - a dedicated group of individuals have turned out to our weekly meetings where we had developed three key focus areas: we meet every Friday at lunchtime in rm19. We have focused on;

1. Asylum Seekers/Refugees
2. Homophobic bullying
3. Racism
4. Women's rights/ domestic violence
5. War crimes
6. Disability rights.
7. Regular Articles to Aurora.

We also developed the four *pillars* for our group: *Compassion, Knowledge, Perspective and Diversity*, through which we continue our fight for human rights.

AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Australian Human Rights Commission plays a pivotal role in shaping our views and advocacy of our key areas. This year, we're looking to introduce a new focus area: *Disability Rights*.

Our work in the Human Rights Group is intrinsically connected with the work and views of the Australian Human Rights Commission. The views and legal perspectives for our four key areas are presented on the Australian Human Rights Commission website and can be examined through the following web-links:

- **Homophobic Bullying:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sexual-orientation-sex-gender-identity>
- **Asylums Seekers:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees>
- **Racism, it stops with me:** <http://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/>
- **Disability Rights:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights>

WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR, AND WHAT'S THE FOCUS FOR THIS YEAR?

We discuss the focus areas and look at different possibilities of raising awareness within the staff and students of St. Clare's. We do this through awareness days such as *Wear it Purple Day*, invitation of guests speakers as well as presentations in assemblies.



HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING (WEAR IT PURPLE DAY)

Wear it Purple day focused on targeting homophobic bullying and any other bullying or discrimination towards the LGBTIQ community within our school and the wider community. The first of August last year saw the commencement of new Federal legislation making discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status unlawful. This was known as 'The Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 2013'. As the Human Rights Group became aware of this new legislation, we felt empowered to make our school community aware of the discrimination and bullying present within the school grounds.

As a group, we're determined to raise awareness of this issue again this year – keeping in mind that the group is well aware of the parameters of the issue that we're addressing in our school. That is, the unlawful bullying and discrimination of individuals on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

The God we love does not distance himself from anybody.

"...when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed" (Luke 14:13).

ASYLUM SEEKERS

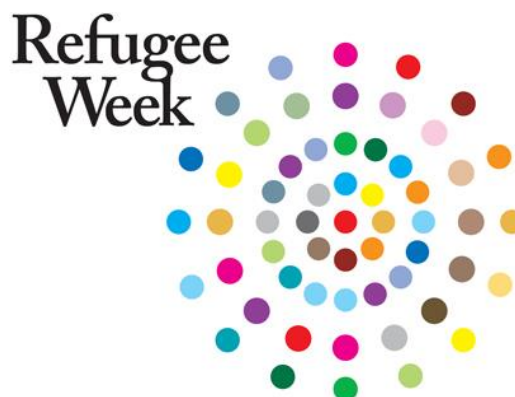
Last year, the Asylum Seeker interest group within the Human Rights Group made a small presentation addressing the difference between Asylum Seekers and Refugees. It also looked at the statistics, for example, the number of asylum seekers found to be genuine refugees.

We were fortunate enough to have a guest speaker come and speak to us about his experience as a volunteer of the Salvation Army working in the Manus Island detention centre. Ed shared his emotional story and experience working with the asylum seekers kept in detention and described the poor condition of the detention centre itself.

The group has also been made aware that the Salvation Army's role in providing support in the detention centres has since been ceased by the Government late last year. We initiated a letter writing campaign that sent over 100 letters to Nauru.

While the debate of the treatment of asylum seekers may be seen as political to many – we, as the Human Rights Group are not focused on the politics behind the "asylum seeker issue". We're looking at the rights of the asylum seekers and focusing on the responsibilities of Australia as a signatory of the Refugee Convention. For structural guidance and an apolitical view, the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission will form the basis of our research and work within the community at St. Clare's.

In the near future, we'll be tackling some new issues which have arisen since looking at the issue last year. These include *children in detention*, the *legality and treatment of asylum seekers* and the role of Australia as a signatory of the Refugee Convention. The group may also be writing letters to our local member, *David Gillespie* and immigration minister *Scott Morrison*, to voice our concerns in regards to the human rights of asylum seekers.





RACISM, IT STOPS WITH ME

The “Racism, it stops with me” campaign initiated by the Australian Human Rights Commission will be our first focus area which we will bring forward to the school community this year. Racism is an ongoing issue in our school and the Human Rights Group are looking to help bring awareness and understanding in our school community.



The Australian Human Rights Commission endorses the *International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination* towards the end of March (21st March 2014) and we aim to use this day as a catalyst and an opportunity to make a small presentation to the school.

DISABILITY RIGHTS

The discrimination of people with disabilities was brought forward by new members to the Human Rights Group towards the end of last year.



Our research into disability rights will commence in the coming weeks with an aim to bring staff and students aware of our concerns in Semester 2 – in line with the International Day of People with Disability. Hopefully, we'll have more to say in regards to this key area as research ramps up.

Like the homophobic bullying focus area, posters discouraging the use of the phrase “that’s so retarded” were printed towards the end of last year – ready for distribution later this year in classrooms.

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP ‘VIRTUAL CLASSROOM’

The idea of having our own website or “virtual classroom” was suggested early in the discussions last year as one of our awareness platforms. The group is extremely pleased that we’ve been able to launch this webpage on our school portal, *MNLive*.

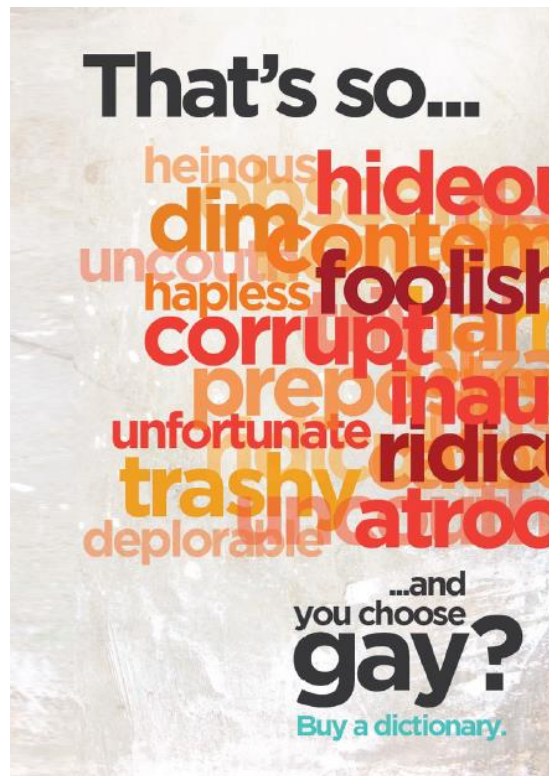
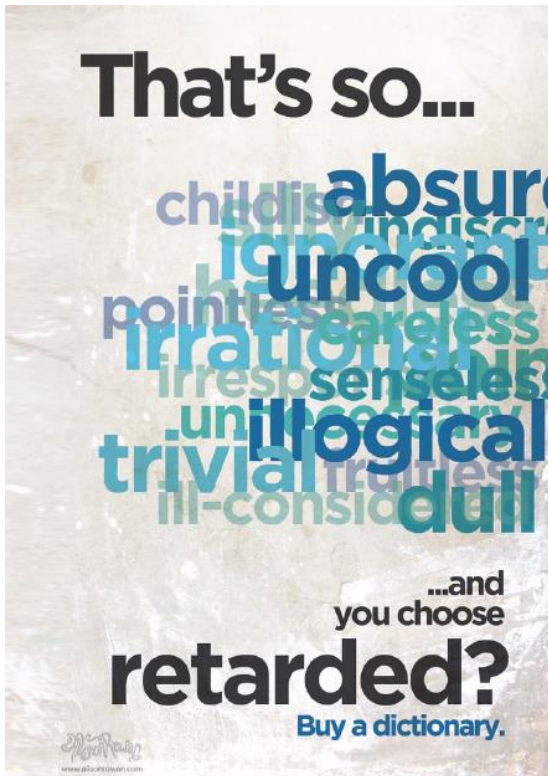
In the coming weeks and months, members of the *Human Rights Group* will be invited to write “blog posts” on different topics of human rights. These posts will be moderated and edited by our mentors, *Mr Chalmers, Mrs Eady or Mr Hough*, before being posted or published.

Staff and students are encouraged and invited to visit our group’s page and read any future posts we put up in relation to our key focus areas and any other future announcements.



POSTERS

The following posters were printed last year, ready for distribution within our school in the near future.





"Buy a dictionary." posters by Alison Rowan

OUR LOGO



This new design of for the St. Clare's Human Rights Group logo is aimed at simplifying our original design, but continues to symbolise the rationale behind the group.

The two green hands at the bottom of the design represent our group. It symbolises the compassion we have for all people within our school community, and our wider community. The green colour meant to identify with the St. Clare's community, being a key colour on our school emblem. This slowly fades to a brighter tone of green, as we radiate our influence within the school – becoming a more enlightened and knowledgeable community.

The blue sphere underneath the Chi Rho sign is the logo for the *Australian Commission of Human Rights*. The commission forms our core foundations and is what underpins our group's direction.

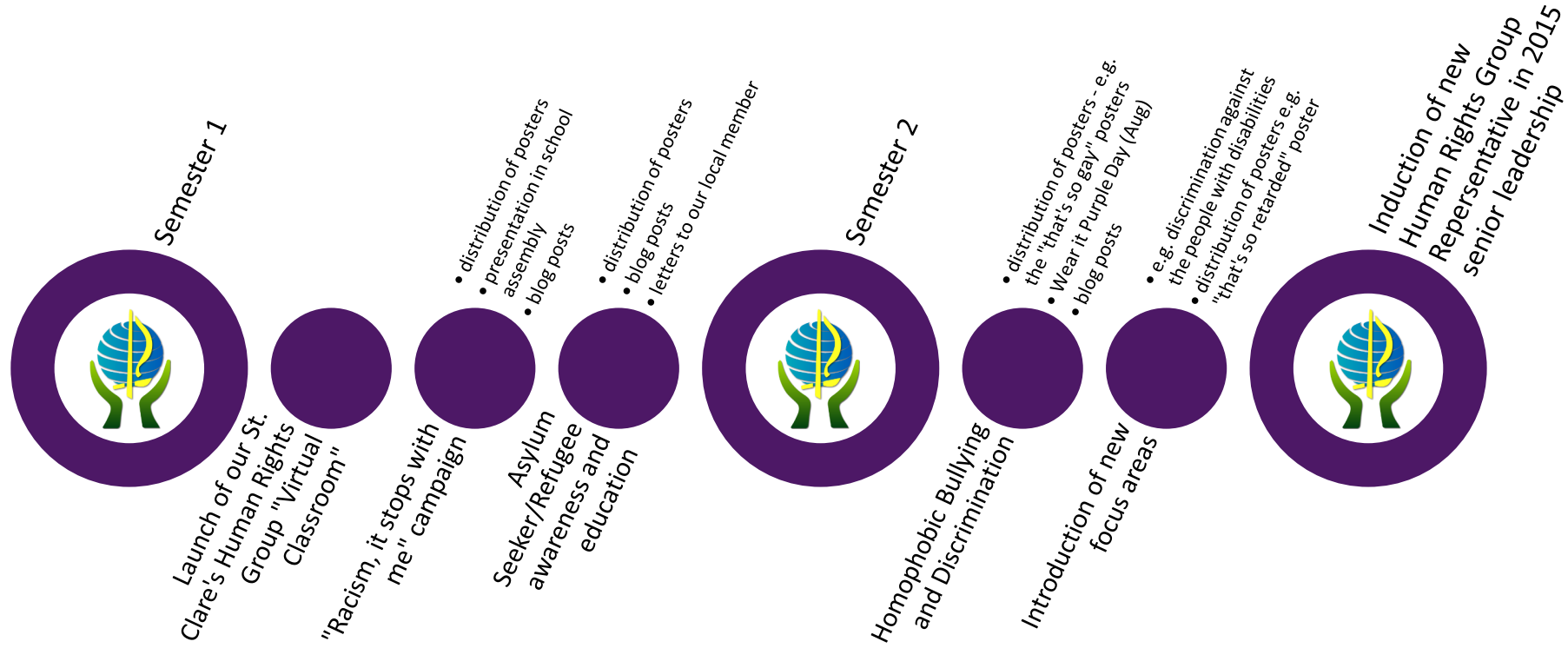
The Chi Rho sign has always been the school symbol and continues to serve as the dominant feature in our logo as a reminder of identity within the school. Being placed on top of the compassionate hands of our group and superimposed on the ACHR logo, the St. Clare's community is symbolised as being guided and supported by us, and by extension – the *commission* who play a vital role in our direction as a group.

WEB LINKS

- **St Clare's Human Rights Group (Virtual Classroom):**
- **Australian Human Rights Commission Website:** <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/>



TIMELINE FOR THIS YEAR





TARGETED EVENTS CALENDAR

The following timeline is a rough outline and timeframe of events endorsed by the Australian Human Rights Commission. The aim is to look towards incorporating these events and awareness days into our school calendar. The events fall roughly in line with the focus areas we're discussing in our timeline.

Australian Human Rights Commission Events Calendar

Term	Date	Focus Area – AHRC Event
Term 1	21 st March 2015	Racism, it stops with me - International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Term 2	15 th June 2015 – 21 st June 2015	Asylum Seekers / Refugees - World Refugee Week
Term 3	<u>TBC</u> 29 th August 2015	Homophobic Bullying - Wear it Purple Day
Term 4	2 nd December 2015	Disability Rights - International Day of Persons with a Disability

AWARENESS PLATFORMS

