

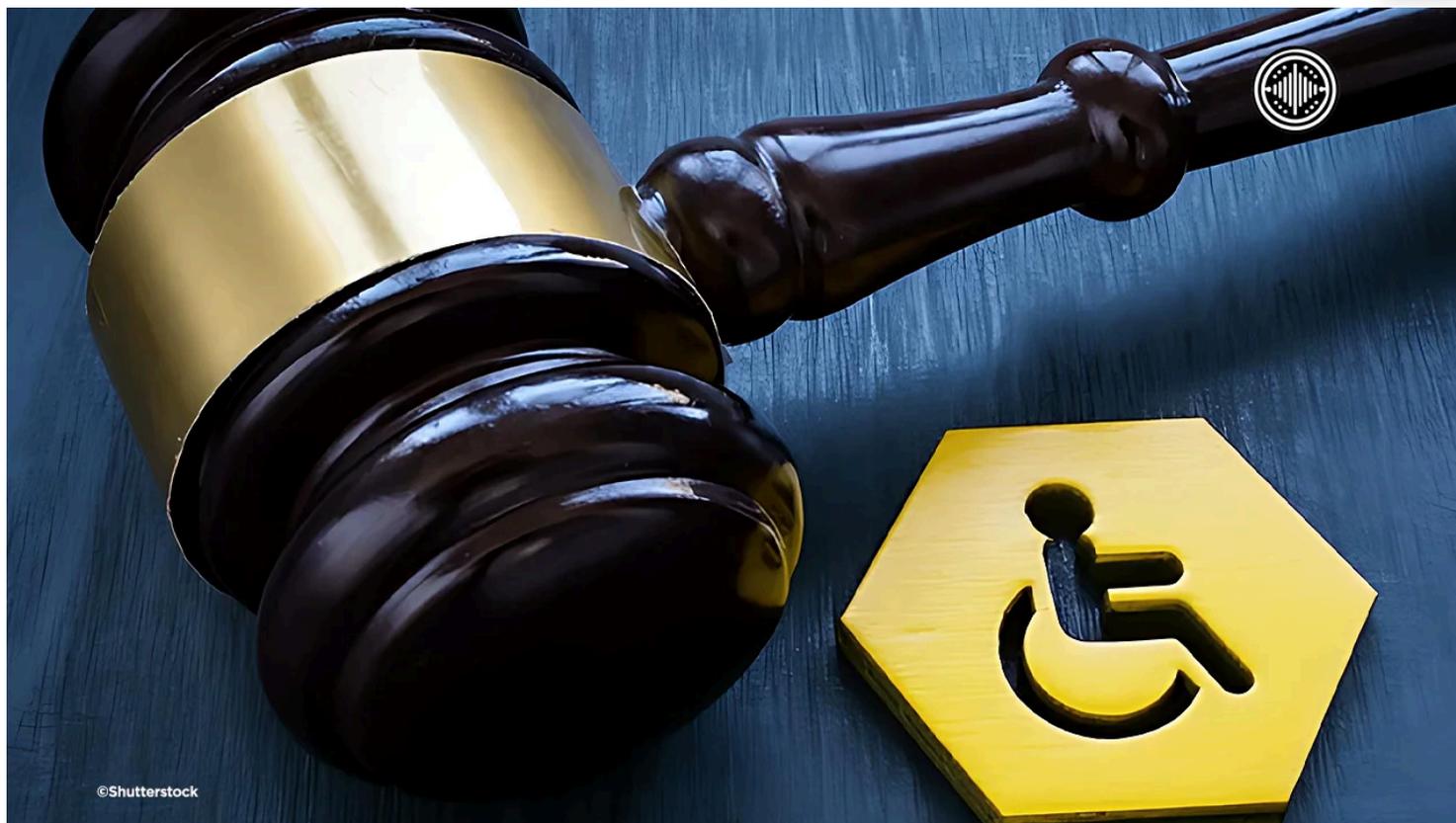
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Australia to Review Disability Discrimination Act

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The Australian Government has announced a formal review of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, a move welcomed by the Australian Human Rights Commission. The review is expected to simplify and modernise the legislation, strengthening protections for the over five million Australians living with disability. The Act, which has been in place

for more than three decades, has long been criticised for its limitations and outdated structure.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was originally introduced to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disability in areas such as employment, education, and access to public services. However, the law has not kept pace with evolving societal attitudes or the challenges faced by people with disabilities today. Calls for reform have come from advocacy organisations, legal experts, and most recently, the Disability Royal Commission. The commission highlighted systemic issues, noting that people with disability are routinely marginalised and excluded from full participation in society. 

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) Disability Discrimination Commissioner Rosemary Kayess emphasised the urgency of the review. “People with disability continue to experience inequality and discrimination on a daily basis,” she said. “They are marginalised and excluded in many areas of their lives due to ableist systems, policies and attitudes. This clearly shows the DDA isn’t working as intended.” The AHRC has stressed that updating the DDA is essential to removing persistent legal and procedural barriers that prevent individuals with disability from seeking justice or fair treatment under the law.

A comprehensive review of the DDA will need to balance the rights of individuals with the responsibilities of employers, service providers, and public institutions. For the Act to become more effective, any reforms must focus not just on legal clarity but also on ensuring practical enforcement. The DDA’s review has been framed as an opportunity to ensure that legislation provides meaningful protection, beyond symbolic measures. Commissioners and advocates suggest the reform could

significantly improve how Australia addresses disability rights, if approached with rigor.

