

## **Kate Eastman SC**

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Barrister

Kate Eastman SC is a barrister based in Sydney and working around Australia. Kate came to the Bar via the then Human Rights and Equal Opportunity and Allen Allen & Hemsley. Her practice at the Bar is in the areas of human rights, discrimination, employment and public law. Over the past 20 + years, she has appeared in many human rights and discrimination claims heard in the Federal and State courts/tribunals. Kate is also a Senior Fellow of the Faculty of Law at Monash University. She teaches in the post graduate law program at Monash University covering a range of international human rights law and human rights advocacy subjects.

### **Upholding the Right to Equality and Freedom of Religion – What Is the Role of the Law?**

What happens when there is a clash of fundamental human rights? How do we resolve apparent conflicts of the right to equality and other human rights? The law plays an important role in protecting a wide range of human rights. The law also assists in resolving conflicts where human rights appear to be in conflict. This paper examines how international human rights law and Australian law strikes a balance where the right to equality and freedom of religion come into conflict. In recent times, Australian courts and tribunals have been called on to resolve such disputes and this paper will discuss recent cases including debate about the hijab, same-sex foster carers and suicide prevention programs for same-sex attracted teenagers. This paper will consider the way in which the courts have resolved such conflicts and ask whether the law has a role in advancing community cohesion.