



Hon. Robert McClelland MP
Attorney-General



MEDIA RELEASE

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SOUTH PACIFIC LAWYERS ASSOCIATION LAUNCHED IN SYDNEY

Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Law Council of Australia President Alexander Ward yesterday launched a new professional organisation for lawyers to build expertise across the Pacific region.

The South Pacific Lawyers Association (SPLA) was launched at the Pacific Young Lawyers' Forum, being held in Sydney as part of this week's Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting.

"The new South Pacific Lawyers Association is a great initiative that will promote the professional development of Pacific lawyers and strengthen law and justice in the region," Mr McClelland said.

"The Australian Government is providing \$475,000 to assist the Law Council build its pro bono program to improve legal professionalism across the region.

"This week's Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting will have a strong focus on the Pacific legal profession and includes the first law officers and practising lawyers from more than 15 countries around the region."

The SPLA was established in partnership with the Law Council of Australia and the New Zealand Law Society to assist developing law societies and bar associations and to promote the interests of the legal profession in the South Pacific.

The SPLA Chair Ross Ray QC said the body provided a united voice for South Pacific lawyers.

"The SPLA seeks to develop collegiality amongst lawyers in the South Pacific and works closely with members to promote the administration of justice and the development and improvement of law throughout the region.

"We have a committed body of members and will be working towards an active agenda in the coming years to further build upon the strong foundation we have already established," Mr Ray said.

Mr Ray also acknowledged the assistance of the International Bar Association (IBA) and said the SPLA looked forward to their ongoing support.

Law Council of Australia President, Alexander Ward said the legal profession in Australia is looking forward to discussing key areas of mutual interest and benefit with members of the South Pacific legal profession.

“For lawyers in Australia and the South Pacific some of the key areas of mutual interest include access to justice, maintaining professional standards and legal education.

“It is envisaged the establishment of the SPLA will provide the necessary support structure to be the leading representative body for the legal profession in the South Pacific.

“The Law Council is committed to supporting this body and is proud to be involved with the SPLA in conjunction with the New Zealand Law Society and our South Pacific friends and colleagues,” Mr Ward said.

The SPLA will hold its first executive meeting on Tuesday 12 July to establish its strategic direction and program for the coming year.

More information on the SPLA is available [online](#).

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