

## Law Council throws support behind Indigenous lawyer awards

The Law Council of Australia has welcomed the announcement by the Attorney-General of the 2011 Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year Award; as well as the launch of the inaugural Indigenous Law Student of the Year Prize.

The Law Council, as the peak body for the Australia legal profession, will assist the Government in the selection process by recommending deserving nominees to the Attorney-General's Department for both awards.

The Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year Award recognises the outstanding work and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers to the public and to the legal profession. The winner will receive \$5,000 toward their professional development.

Last year's inaugural Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year Award recipient, Tony McAvoy, said winning the Award was a significant milestone for him and his family—and humbling to be recognised amongst his peers.

The inaugural Indigenous Law Student of the Year Prize recognises outstanding Indigenous law students who have achieved in the academic arena and who have also made notable contributions to their community. The winner of this new prize will receive \$2,500 to further their studies.

Law Council of Australia President Alexander Ward said the awards highlight the important legal work Indigenous lawyers undertake in the Australian community on a daily basis.

"Indigenous people are still vastly underrepresented in the legal profession and awards such as the Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year show how much the profession values the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers," Mr Ward said.

"The addition of the Indigenous Law Student of the Year Prize is a fantastic initiative that will help develop the next generation of Indigenous lawyers."

The Law Council already supports Indigenous Australians in the legal profession through its John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship, awarded annually to talented Indigenous students to assist them with their legal studies.

Mr Ward added that the Law Council has an active agenda in advocating for the rights of Indigenous Australians and praised the Attorney-General for his efforts in highlighting the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lawyers and law students.

"The Law Council is proud to be associated with these awards and look forward to their ongoing success," he said.

---

**Vanessa Kleinschmidt, Director Communications & Stakeholder Relations**

P. 02 6246 3716 // M. 0408 014 110

E. [vanessa.kleinschmidt@lawcouncil.asn.au](mailto:vanessa.kleinschmidt@lawcouncil.asn.au) // [www.lawcouncil.asn.au](http://www.lawcouncil.asn.au)