



**Hon. Robert McClelland MP**  
Attorney-General



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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011

### **NEW INITIATIVE & FUNDING TO BRING MORE LAWYERS TO THE BUSH**

Attorney-General Robert McClelland and President of the Law Council of Australia Alexander Ward today launched a new initiative aimed at attracting more lawyers to work in rural, regional and remote areas.

Mr McClelland said the launch of the RRRLaw (Rural, Regional and Remote Law) project in Perth coincided with the announcement of \$300,000 in new funding for the WA Country Lawyers Program.

“The Government recognises that geography and isolation can present challenges when it comes to providing access to justice,” Mr McClelland said.

“Australia has legal system based on the rule of law and the principles of equality and access to justice for each and every Australian – no matter where they live.

“The RRRLaw project is an excellent initiative that will go a long way to attracting lawyers to remote and regional areas to improve legal services.

“In 2010, the Government provided \$1.1 million for initiatives to attract and retain lawyers in selected locations across Australia, including the resource we’re launching today.

“There are also other valuable programs underway to enhance legal services and support the lawyers on the ground delivering those services.

“This includes the WA Country Lawyers Program, funded by the Australian Government and run through WA Legal Aid, which employs 23 lawyers across Western Australia.

“This program has been very successful in reducing vacancies in regional and remote service areas, especially in the Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Services.

“Since the introduction of the Program, vacancy levels in publicly funded services have dropped from 24 per cent 4 per cent in regional areas of WA.

“I am very pleased to announce today that I have approved an additional \$300,000 in funding for this program in recognition of the difference it is making.

President of the Law Council of Australia Alexander Ward said RRRLaw was about improving access to justice for people in RRR areas of Australia.

“In March 2009, the Law Council coordinated a nationwide survey of legal practitioners in RRR areas that confirmed what we anecdotally already knew: RRR Australia is having difficulty in attracting and retaining legal professionals,” Mr Ward said.

The survey results formed the basis of a funding submission to the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert McClelland MP, for the development of a campaign to assist in the recruitment and retention of lawyers in RRR areas.

“Today we’re launching an exciting and interactive marketing campaign, which includes a website and DVD to assist in addressing the recruitment and retention issues facing legal practitioners in RRR Australia.

“rrrlaw.com.au is the key resource for the RRR initiative - the website links people to job opportunities in RRR Australia and has everything practitioners need to know about legal careers in RRR Australia including interactive case studies from people working in RRR destinations.

“The website also highlights the development opportunities available in RRR areas, including a range of training programs and incentives available to RRR practitioners,” Mr Ward said.

The RRRLaw DVD gives legal practitioners an insight into what life is like in RRR Australia by breaking down myths and highlighting the exciting opportunities available.

“The DVD shows real lawyers practising in a diverse range of locations across RRR Australia including Broome, Darwin, Townsville, Dubbo, Shepparton, Burnie and Devonport,” Mr Ward said.

“It profiles the diverse range of work RRR practitioners do, why practising law in RRR Australia is so fulfilling as well as the rewarding lifestyle and career benefits of working in these areas.

“There really are some excellent opportunities, for lawyers of any disposition, out in RRR Australia—I encourage all lawyers to explore the website and DVD.

“It might just be the best career move they ever make,” Mr Ward said.

RRRLaw is an initiative of the Law Council of Australia funded by the Commonwealth Government as part of a broader project on Recruitment and Retention of Lawyers in Rural, Regional and Remote (RRR) Areas undertaken by the National Association of Community Legal Centres Inc.

Further information on the Law Council’s RRRLaw initiative is available at [www.rrrlaw.com.au](http://www.rrrlaw.com.au)

<b>Contacts:</b>	<b>Ryan Liddell</b>	<b>(Attorney-General)</b>	<b>0427 225 763</b>
	<b>Vanessa Klienschmidt</b>	<b>(Law Council)</b>	<b>0408 014 110</b>