

Law Council of Australia to administer Asia Pacific pro bono clearinghouse

The Law Council has welcomed the announcement by the Commonwealth Attorney General regarding funding for the establishment and administration of a clearinghouse at the Council's Secretariat to support the Australian legal profession's pro bono work in the Asia-Pacific.

Law Council of Australia President, Mr Alexander Ward said the funding will assist in ensuring the future development of the legal profession within the region and in the effective promotion of the rule of law within the Asia-Pacific.

"The purpose of the Centre for Asia Pacific Pro Bono (CAPPB) will be to coordinate requests from the Asia-Pacific Region for pro bono assistance," Mr Ward said.

The Law Council of Australia said the requests are expected to come from a range of government and non-government organisations, courts and legal professional associations.

"We expect we will receive requests seeking assistance to provide legal advice, draft and reform laws and to provide training and support.

"The Centre will facilitate the matching of requests with providers of pro bono legal services in Australia to ensure appropriate providers are matched with requests," Mr Ward said.

Over the coming months the Law Council will focus on the establishment of the CAPPB which will include the promotion of the Centre both nationally and internationally.

"The Law Council looks forward to establishing the CAPPB and is committed to working with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and the International Pro Bono Advisory Group to further develop the initiative," Mr Ward said.

The announcement of the CAPPB coincides with the official launch of the South Pacific Lawyers' Association (SPLA).

"On Sunday we will officially launch the SPLA which has been established by the Law Council of Australia and the New Zealand Law Society to develop collegiality amongst lawyers in the South Pacific and to promote the administration of justice and the development and improvement of law throughout the region," Mr Ward said.

For more information about the SPLA visit www.southpacificlawyers.org

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