MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 19 October 2011

HOST STATE FOR NATIONAL LEGAL PROFESSION REFORM ANNOUNCED

Attorney-General Robert McClelland today announced the new National Legal Services Board and National Legal Services Commissioner as part of reforms to the legal profession will be hosted by New South Wales.

Mr McClelland also said Victoria has agreed to introduce legislation to implement the reforms that will be replicated across participating jurisdictions.

“National reforms to the legal profession have been four years in the making and I’m delighted we can now confirm the final steps in implementing the scheme,” he said.

“These reforms will serve the interests of both consumers and the legal profession by improving consumer protection, protecting the independence of the legal profession and ensuring access to justice.

“Four jurisdictions - New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory – are taking part in the reforms as they start, covering around 85 per cent of Australia’s practising lawyers.

“This means these reforms will deliver benefits for the vast majority of the legal profession and I’m confident the remaining jurisdictions will come on board once they can see the clear benefits of the scheme up and running.

“Participating jurisdictions held a ballot this week for which state should be the host jurisdiction for the national board.

“I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the NSW, Victorian, Queensland and Northern Territory Attorneys-General in progressing these reforms.”

Mr McClelland said the reforms will bring improvements to the legal profession across the board.

“I strongly believe we can no longer justify the current local regulation of such an important profession, one that’s responsible for generating around $13 billion a year,” he said.

“I commend my colleagues from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory for their good faith and constructive approach to these reforms.”

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