

## COMMUNIQUÉ

The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) today held its second meeting for 2008. The Commonwealth, State and Territory Attorneys-General, the Commonwealth Minister for Home Affairs and the Associate Justice Minister of New Zealand, held discussions on over 20 matters of substantive legal reforms for all jurisdictions. The Norfolk Island Minister with responsibility for police and legal issues also attended the meeting.

### **Strategic Plan and Agenda Review**

Ministers demonstrated their commitment to reinvigorate the legal reform process by agreeing on immediate action to streamline the SCAG agenda.

They agreed to focus on a number of high priority items that fit within key themes, demonstrating their shared commitment to achieving results on issues of national importance.

This agreement follows the delivery of a Strategic Plan and comprehensive Agenda Review over the past 4 months. An extensive stocktake of current projects on the SCAG Agenda has been undertaken. The Agenda has now been modified and simplified by removing items from the Agenda and referring items to the National Justice Chief Executive Officers Group.

Ministers also agreed to a number of procedural changes, giving them greater flexibility in adding items to the agenda and encouraging more general discussion and information sharing. The changes ensure more time at meetings for Ministers to focus on high priority substantive items.

Processes will be streamlined with a shorter SCAG Agenda, more dynamic and effective meetings, a monitoring role for the SCAG Secretariat, less paperwork for SCAG Officers and a clearer synergy between the work of SCAG and the National Justice Chief Executive Officers Group.

The new approach will assist in streamlining SCAG's operations and facilitating the faster resolution of issues.

Ministers asked the Secretariat to ensure that the public was better able to access information about SCAG and its activities on its website. The summary of decisions and information on the strategic review will be available soon on [www.scag.org.au](http://www.scag.org.au)

### **White Ribbon Ambassadors**

On the eve of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, all Ministers agreed to become ambassadors of the White Ribbon Foundation, signalling their commitment to reducing violence against women.

### **Key Decisions**

Significant progress was made today in areas including work towards a national register of suppression orders, proportionate liability, evidence laws, a judicial exchange program, indigenous justice issues, harmonisation of anti-discrimination laws and criminal laws.

Ministers made the attached decisions under each of their newly identified themes.