

Law Council issues Progress Report on Government's Human Rights Framework

Last week marked the one year anniversary of the release of the Commonwealth Government's Australia's Human Rights Framework ('the Framework'), issued in response to the findings of the 2009 National Consultation on Human Rights.

The Law Council of Australia has been actively involved in working with the Government to implement the Framework initiatives and has developed a Progress Report to highlight the advancements made to date and the areas in need of improvement and further action.

Law Council of Australia President Mr Alexander Ward said the Framework, which includes a focus on improving human rights education and enhancing Parliamentary engagement with human rights standards, has made an important contribution to improving the protection and promotion of human rights in Australia and the Law Council congratulates the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert McClelland, on his work in this area.

"As the Law Council's Progress Report outlines, the Framework initiatives appear to be on track to make a positive difference in the lives of Australians who may previously have had difficulty understanding, accessing or enforcing their basic individual rights.

"However, there is more work to do – particularly in terms of implementing certain Framework initiatives that require legislative or policy change," Mr Ward said.

The Progress Report highlights some of the positive outcomes achieved in areas such as improving community awareness of human rights.

"Important first steps have also been taken to establish mechanisms to enhance human rights scrutiny of new laws and regulations," Mr Ward said.

The Progress Report also highlights the areas where further action is required, in particular with regard to reviewing policies and practise for compliance with human rights and consolidating federal anti-discrimination laws.

"The Law Council looks forwards to continuing to work with the Commonwealth Government over the remaining three years of the Framework to ensure the initiatives are implemented in a way that maximises their ability to address the gaps in human rights protection identified during the nation-wide consultation in 2009," Mr Ward said.

The Law Council's Progress Report is available at www.lawcouncil.asn.au

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