



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

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Media Release

Law Council Seeks Pre-election Commitment on Burning Legal Issues

Legal aid funding, client legal privilege, same sex marriages and a Bill of Rights are just a few of the major issues the Law Council of Australia has invited political parties to address in the lead up to the federal election later this year.

Law Council President Tim Bugg said, "We recently asked our members – the law societies, bar associations and Large Law Firm Group – to nominate particular federal issues of importance to them, which they would like to see addressed by political parties and independent members contesting the 2007 Federal Election."

Amongst the requests, the Law Council has asked political parties to indicate their support for an increase in overall funding for legal aid, including the re-establishment of a civil legal aid scheme and increased funding for dedicated Indigenous Legal Services.

"It is well documented that legal aid funding is insufficient to meet the needs of disadvantaged people within the community, particularly Indigenous Australians and people living in rural and remote areas," Mr Bugg said.

The Law Council has also asked parties whether they would support a process to examine a Bill of Rights for Australia, or whether they are behind legislative recognition of same sex marriages or civil unions.

Other key issues identified by the Law Council include anti-money laundering, freedom of information, detention provisions under anti-terrorism legislation and an Australian Judicial Commission.

The Law Council has requested comments on these issues by 7 September 2007.

"The issues we have chosen are close to the hearts of practising lawyers around the nation and relevant to the well-being of all Australians," Mr Bugg concluded.

The list of pre-election issues is available at www.lawcouncil.asn.au

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The Law Council of Australia exists to represent the legal profession at the national level, to speak on behalf of its constituent bodies on national issues, and to promote the administration of justice, access to justice and general improvement of the law.

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