New President Says Law Council Must Continue to Represent Entire Profession

Engaging with Australia’s practising lawyers on the full spectrum of legal issues is high on the list of priorities for new Law Council President John Corcoran.

Mr Corcoran, a Melbourne-based lawyer and former President of the Law Institute of Victoria, takes over from outgoing President Ross Ray QC, who has led the Law Council since October 2007.

“I want to meet with and talk to individuals and organisations, not just in the metropolitan centres but also in regional and rural Australia,” Mr Corcoran said.

“There is no ‘typical’ Australian lawyer – from partners in large firms to sole practitioners to lawyers working in Community Legal Centres, all have their own diverse range of concerns and priorities. Nevertheless, it’s vital that the Law Council represents each and every one.”

“As well as listening to their perspective on the profession, I want to convey to them the great work the Law Council is doing. Do the lawyers in Albury, for example, know what the Law Council is doing to make it easier for them to practise in Wodonga?”

In addition to his local focus, Mr Corcoran wants to continue the efforts of the Law Council to build relationships with its overseas counterparts and help open up markets and increase opportunities for Australian lawyers.

“T’d like to maintain the Law Council’s efforts in the Asia-Pacific region – it is the preferred destination for the bulk of Australia’s lawyers who want to practise offshore. As Australian lawyers, we have a competitive advantage over our European and American counterparts, given our close proximity to these nations.”

Mr Corcoran said other priority areas for the Law Council over the coming 12 months would include the National Profession Project, e-conveyancing, harmonisation of laws, access to justice issues and human rights.

He also paid tribute to Mr Ray. “A lot of excellent work has been done under Ross’s leadership. Ross’s expertise in the areas of anti-money laundering, cartel conduct and occupation health and safety in particular has been invaluable,” Mr Corcoran concluded.

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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.