

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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POSITIVE SIGNS FOR UNIFORM LAW IN NSW AND VICTORIA

Uniform Law is showing strong early signs of providing a simpler, faster and more efficient system for regulation of more than 70 per cent of Australia's practising lawyers, the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation and the Legal Services Commissioners of Victoria and New South Wales said today.

The Uniform Law commenced operating in NSW and Victoria on 1 July 2015. A new overall overarching regulatory system also began, following the 2014 creation of the Legal Services Council and Office of Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation.

Dale Boucher, the CEO of the Legal Services Council and Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services said bringing the Uniform Law into fruition had been a huge effort by many.

"The Governments of Victoria and NSW have taken a strong lead to pass the Uniform Law and there has been excellent co-operation from the other stakeholders, including the Law Council of Australia, the Australian Bar Association and the Admissions Committee of the Legal Services Council," Mr Boucher said.

"Consumers are the real beneficiaries of these changes as law practices need to keep their clients informed about costs and changes in their matters.

"This applies from Tweed Heads to Tallangatta, from Bairnsdale to Broken Hill and to all points across the two States.

Lawyers everywhere in NSW and Victoria now operate from the same rule book and under the same Uniform Law".

Michael McGarvie, the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner said since 1 July 2015, "a significant proportion of all cost complaints, which historically have been more than half of all complaints to regulators, have resolved with minimal involvement from regulators."

John McKenzie, the NSW Commissioner for Legal Services said there is now a much faster and simpler method of resolving consumer complaints in both States.

"While the rules about costs transparency by lawyers are similar to the past, there is now a greater emphasis on the need for better communication by them and simpler and consistent oversight mechanisms," Mr McKenzie said.

"Lawyers are showing a strong willingness to adapt and this bodes well for the future."

All three Legal Services Commissioners said that they are confident most lawyers try to do the right thing and ultimately benefit from a single Uniform Law and set of Rules that supports them and their clients.

For more information about the Legal Services Council visit www.legalservicescouncil.org.au

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