



Brad Hazzard MP
Attorney General
Minister for Justice



The Hon Robert Clark MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Finance
Minister for Industrial Relations

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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UNIFORM LEGAL SERVICES COUNCIL APPOINTED

Victorian Attorney-General Robert Clark and NSW Attorney General Brad Hazzard today jointly announced the appointment of the inaugural members of the newly established Uniform Legal Services Council.

“The Council will play a key role in the new Uniform Legal Services Scheme, which aims to reduce the complexity of legal services regulation by applying uniform laws and rules for lawyers in Victoria and NSW,” Mr Hazzard said.

Mr Clark and Mr Hazzard said they were pleased to welcome the Hon Michael Black AC QC, former Chief Justice of the Federal Court, as the Council’s first Chair.

“Mr Black’s many years of experience at the bar and in senior judicial office will be invaluable in leading the inaugural Council,” Mr Clark said.

The four council members to join Mr Black are:

Fiona Bennett – a member of the Legal Services Board (Victoria) since 2008 and Chairperson since 2013.

Kim Boettcher – a lawyer with experience in corporate governance, consumer advocacy and practice in both the UK and Australia.

Steven Stevens – the nominee of the Law Council of Australia and a former president of the Law Institute of Victoria and Director of the Law Council of Australia.

Bret Walker SC – the nominee of the Australian Bar Association and a former president of both the Law Council of Australia and the NSW Bar.

“These appointments bring an important mix of regulatory, financial, legal and leadership experience to the Council,” Mr Hazzard said.

“With these appointments, the Council can set about its first major task of making Uniform Rules under the new Scheme,” Mr Clark said.

Both the Victorian and NSW Parliaments have passed legislation applying the Legal Profession Uniform Law to reduce red tape and create consistency between the jurisdictions. The new Scheme is set to commence full operation in the first half of 2015.

MEDIA CONTACTS: New South Wales AG: Leonie Lamont 0407 591 926
Victorian AG: James Copsey 0419 984 371

The Hon Michael Black AC QC

Judge Black was appointed Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia in 1991 and retired in 2010. He is currently a member of List G Barristers in Victoria as a mediator and arbitrator and is Chair of the Australian Law Schools Standards Committee.

Ms Fiona Bennett

Ms Bennett is a director of a number of entities including Beach Energy Limited, Hills Limited and Boom Logistics Limited. She has been a member of the Victorian Legal Services Board since 2008 and Chairperson since January 2013. Ms Bennett is a Chartered Accountant and has previously held senior executive positions at BHP Billiton Ltd and Coles Group Ltd, and has been Chief Financial Officer of several organisations in the health sector. She is Chair of the Audit Committee of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Australian Prudential Authority and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

Ms Kim Boettcher

Ms Boettcher has been a Solicitor at The Aged-care Rights Service Inc. in Sydney, Australia since 2010. She has attended and addressed two United Nations Open-Ended Working Groups on Ageing in New York in 2013 and 2014, in support of a Convention of the Human Rights of Older People. Her organisation forms part of an Australian network of independent Community Legal Centres. Ms Boettcher has practised law in England and Wales, NSW and Queensland. She is also a Member of the NSW Minister of Fair Trading's Retirement Villages Advisory Council and in the past was a Member of the Committee established by the Minister to draft a standard retirement village contract and disclosure documents. Ms Boettcher is also a Member of the COTA NSW Policy Advisory Group and the International Commission of Jurists Australia.

Mr Steven Stevens

Mr Stevens is a tax practitioner and Principal at Stenas Legal. He is a member of the Victorian Legal Services Board, elected as a legal practitioner representative in July 2013. Mr Stevens practised as an economist before being admitted to legal practice in 1988. Between 1993 and 2011, he was a tax partner at Herbert Smith Freehills. Mr Stevens has held a number of positions within the legal profession, including President of the Law Institute of Victoria (2010) and Director at the Law Council of Australia (2010-11). He has been the Chair of the Professional Ethics Committee of the Law Council of Australia since 2009 and has represented the profession on a number of external bodies, including the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration.

Mr Bret Walker SC

Mr Walker is currently a barrister at St James' Hall Chambers. He was admitted to the NSW Bar in 1979 and appointed Senior Counsel in 1993 and Queen's Counsel in 1994. Mr Walker has held several senior positions including President of the NSW Bar Association, President of the Law Council of Australia, Chairman of LCA National Criminal Law Liaison Committee and Governor of the Law Foundation of NSW. He is Editor of the NSW Law Reports. He also held office as the first Independent National Security Legislation Monitor from 2011 to 2014. He prepared the 1993 NSW Barristers' Rules which were adapted to produce the legal profession uniform law in relation to advocacy.