



AUSTRALIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Bar Association appoints new executive team

Fiona McLeod SC from Victoria has been elected President of the Australian Bar Association (ABA), the organisation which represents more than 6000 Australian barristers. Ms McLeod is a former Chair of the Victorian Bar and the Australian Women Lawyers and is currently Treasurer of the Law Council of Australia.

The new Vice President is Patrick O'Sullivan QC from South Australia and William Alstergren QC as Treasurer.

Philip Selth OAM has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Bar Association. Mr Selth is also the Executive Director of the NSW Bar Association.

Ms McLeod said ABA priorities for the year ahead included continuing to speak out strongly on issues that threatened to compromise access to justice for all Australians and the fundamental principles of the Rule of Law.

"It is incumbent on leading national legal institutions to have a strong voice on issues that impact equality before the law, and the integrity of the administration of justice in our nation," she said.

"I have a particular concern about legal aid funding arrangements and the impact of current sentencing policies on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

Ms McLeod said support for State and Territory Bars, in particular smaller Bars to assist them to grow and strengthen, was an important priority for the ABA, as was the implementation of the national legal profession.

"In addition to whatever practical support we can provide barristers locally, I am also committed to developing our contribution to the rule of law in the region and to continuing to promote the interests of Australian barristers overseas through mutual exchanges and co-operative regional initiatives.

"Finally, I remain firmly focussed on promoting equality and diversity, including gender diversity at our independent Bars. We have made progress but there is still much to be done" said Ms McLeod.

The new office bearers bring a diverse range of experience and practices. Ms McLeod, has a broad practice which includes commercial, common law and human rights work. She has represented the Commonwealth in a number of Royal Commissions and is leading the team in the Black Saturday Murrindindi bushfires class action. Mr O'Sullivan, a former President of the South Australian Bar, practises in commercial, insurance and construction law. Mr Alstergren, the immediate Past Chairman of the Victorian Bar Association, practices mainly in the areas of tax, industrial commercial and military law.

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